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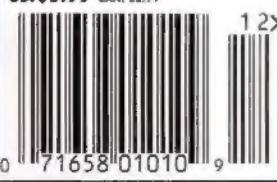
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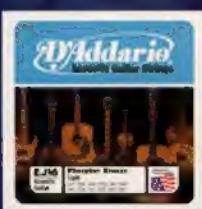


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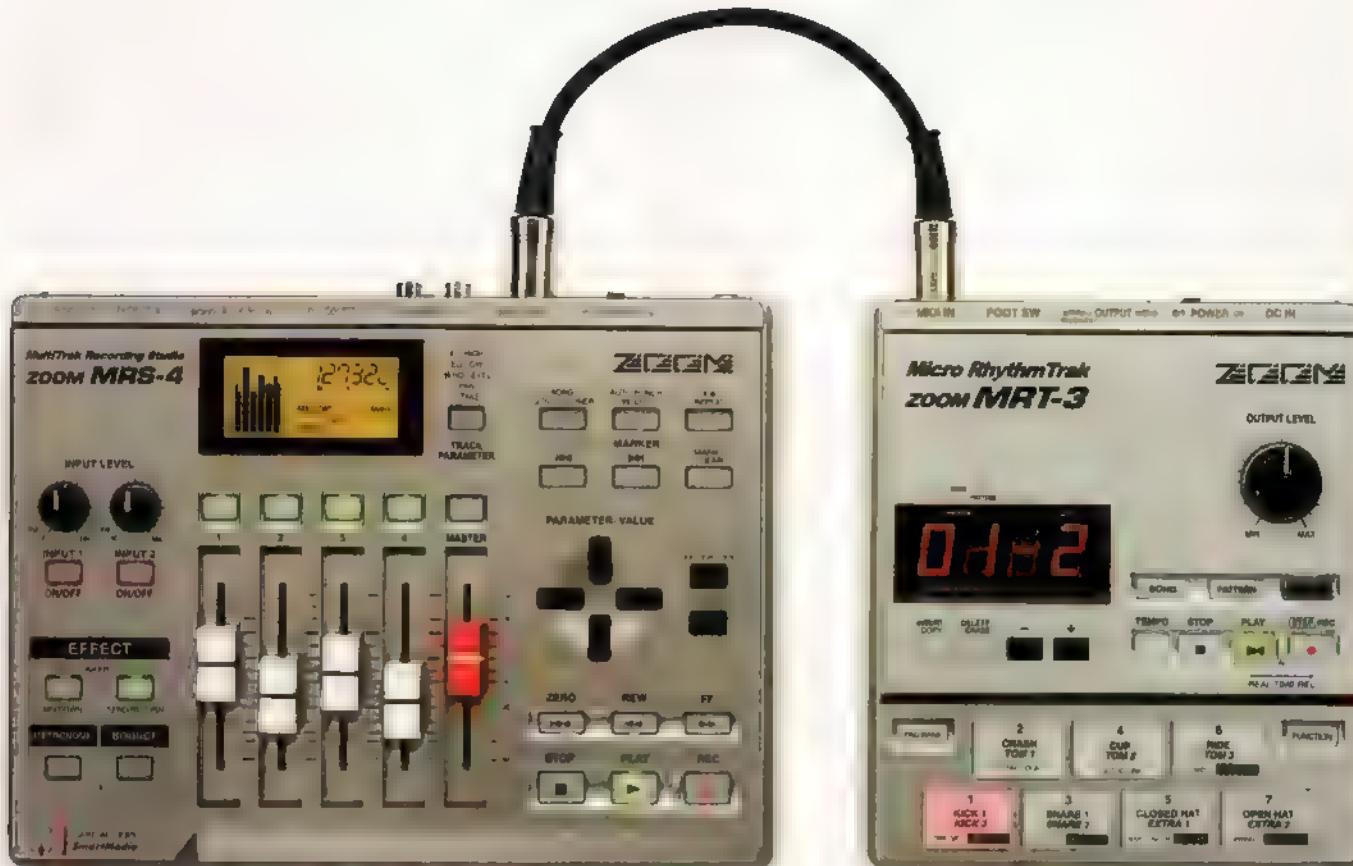
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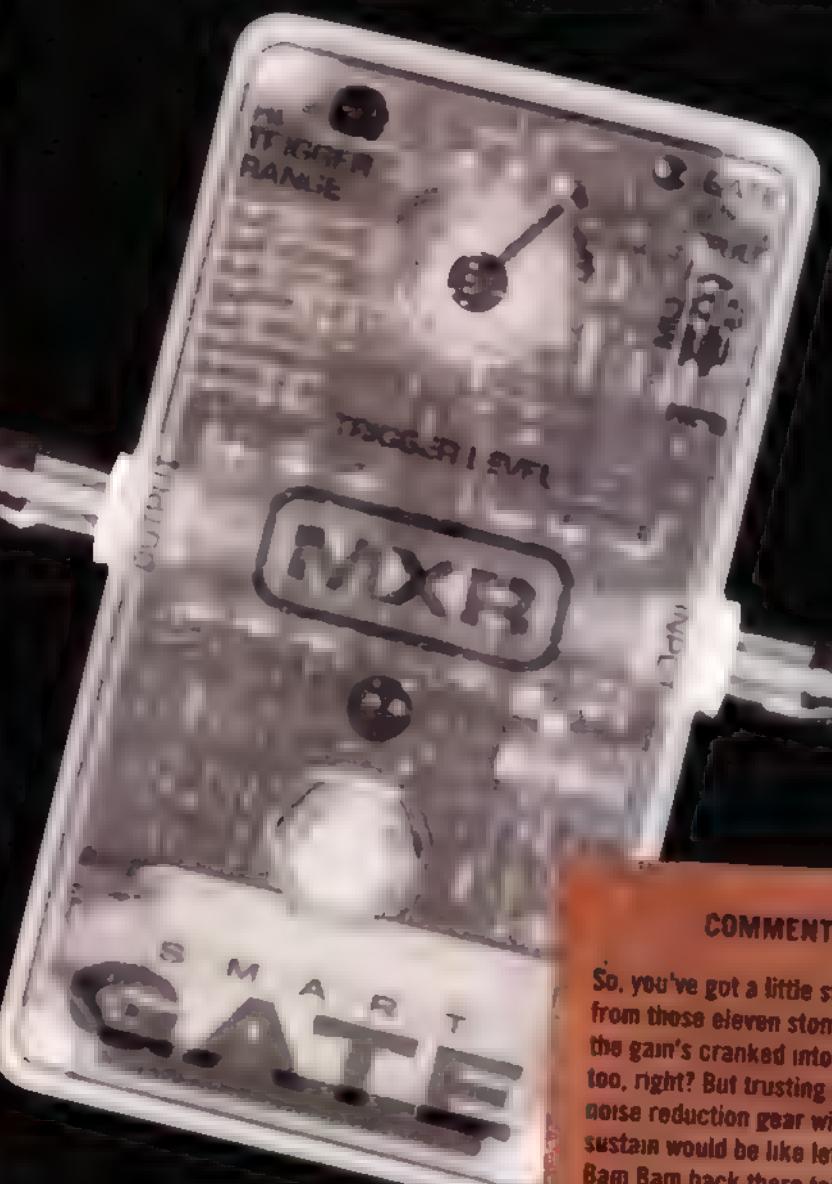
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GuitarPlayer

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Wes Montgomery, 1973



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Cover Photo by Carlos Amoedo

Pop culture is a scary place nowadays, and it's even more horrifying when it's documented in the press. Apparently, the battle for readers and ads is so brutal that some media powers are compelled to deliver the dumbest, pseudo-sexiest, and downright silliest info bits in an effort to out-scream the competition.

Now, *Guitar Player* doesn't get a pass on selling magazines or spotlighting products to a niche-buying public. Every month, we absolutely have to seduce readers to pick up the mag, as well as prove to our manufacturing partners that our readers purchase their gear. But I like to think we accomplish that task by presenting articles that interest you. Beyond that, it's a matter of respecting the artists—and the gear—and ensuring that the coverage is deep, relevant, and educational. We don't have to put a half-undressed actress on the cover to sell mags, and we don't have to eviscerate our editorial mission because a competitor is temporarily changing a few pages of the rulebook. And we also don't have to partner-up in ridiculous stunts—such as getting a massage with a star, being a roadie for a day, or other such nonsense—to present

a clever hook that dazzles a sleepy public. I'm certainly no genius—and I'm not trying to be a snotbox—but it's really bumming me out that basic levels of intelligence and honor and mortality and craft are almost completely dismissed simply to get someone's sweat glands operating.

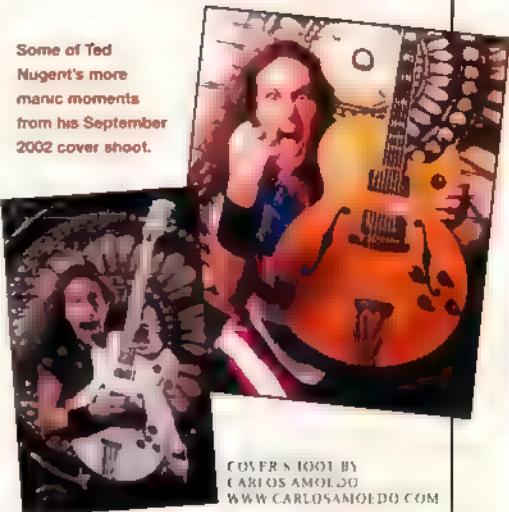
Happily, I can take solace in the fact that my day job doesn't require me to do things that would embarrass me—or patronize our groovy readers. Likewise, I can still approach my music with a sense of awe. (Admittedly, this is because I'm far beyond the age when a major or minor record label is going to start a bidding war for my musical drivel.) I simply have to document my feelings in a way that is honest and real to me.

So, in a world overrun with insincerity, it's gratifying that every *GP* reader is—or should be—manifesting his or her dreams and fears and loves and hopes with music that resonates with truth and commitment. In fact, I'm actually *depending* on your moral compasses to deliver meaningful music. Otherwise, I'll have to turn on the TV—or read some trashy magazine—and be further demoralized by stupidity, false passion, and faulty reason. Save me!

—MICHAEL MOLENDA ■



Assistant Editor Jude Gold and I wrap up the magazine's 35th anniversary year by getting the bound archives off my desk and back into the *GP* library.



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Guitar One, ONE award, June 2002

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Keyboard, KEY BUY award, April 2002



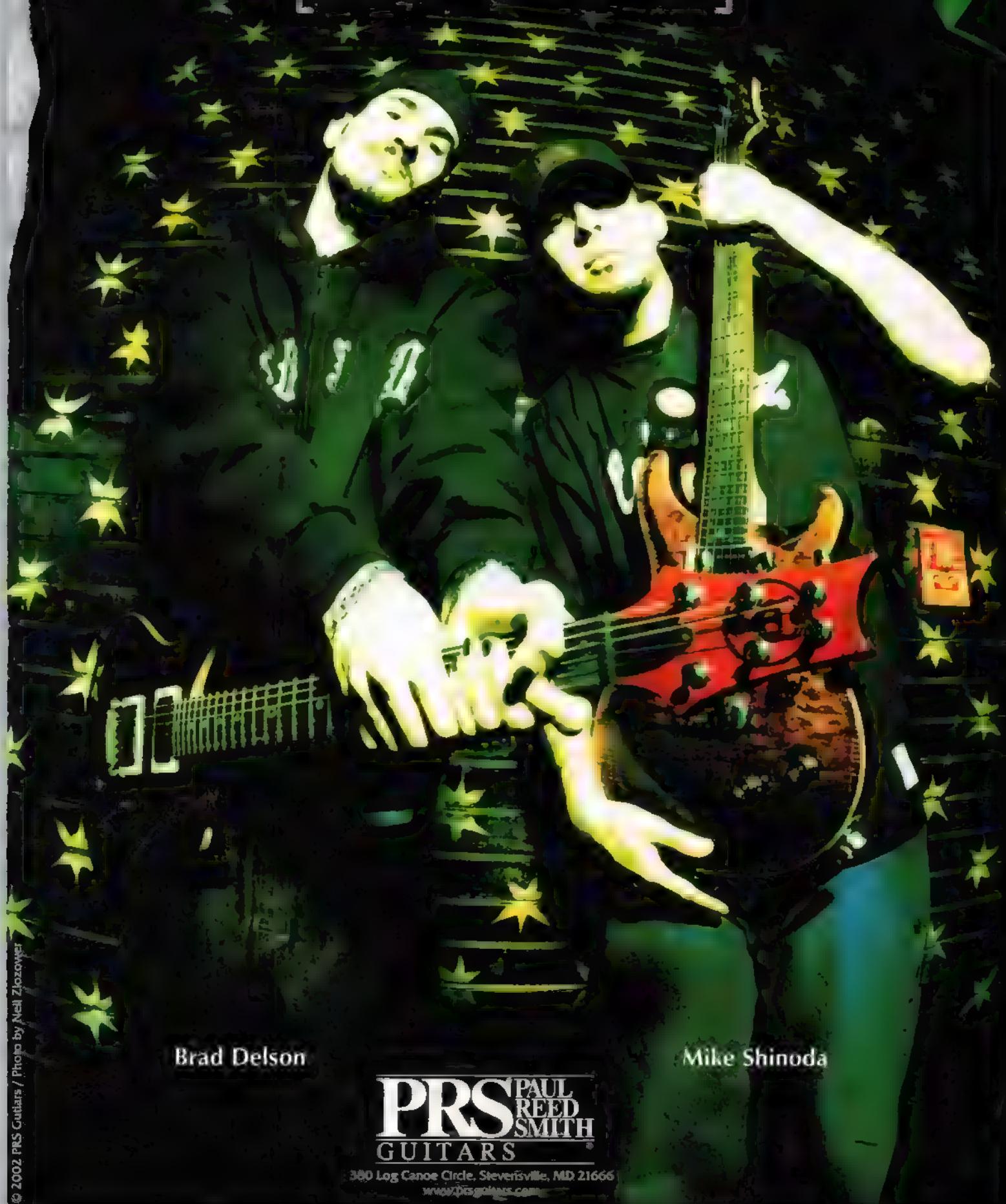
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Feedback

Queens of the Stone Age

I'm a huge Queens of the Stone Age fan, and I love the photos of Josh Homme ("Appetite for Deconstruction," Oct. '02)! Most images of the band are amateur-looking but your guy's photos are the best I've ever seen. Thank you for doing justice to this amazing band.

Kristen Ryan
via Internet

Derek Trucks

October's article on Derek Trucks ("Slide Savant") was a nice follow-up to having just seen him recently play live, both with the Allmans and with his own band. That youngster sure can play! Due to some bizarre good luck this past summer I was able to see Jimmy Herring and Warren Haynes play with Phil Lesh, Derek play with Warren in the Allmans, Pete Townshend, Phil Collen, Mick Jones, and those two incredible guitarists who played with Robert Plant. More than enough inspiration to keep on practicing!

Carlos Pulido
Park Ridge, NJ

Charlie Christian

I really enjoyed the Charlie Christian article in the Oct. '02 issue ("The Magic Christian"). I remember the first time I heard him: On the same day I bought an old Charlie Christian album with "Swing to Bop." I also bought my first Albert King record—two epiphanies in one day! Talk about a double whammy! I still think the "Swing to Bop" solo is clearly a classic!

Unfortunately, epiphanies don't happen all that often anymore—in spite of the many excellent players out there. But I would love to see an article where different artists spoke of the defining moments in their musical lives!

Eric Iverson
Jackson Heights, NY

October

The new issue (Oct. '02) blew me away straight from the opening editorial! Way to throw down the gauntlet. And not one kid in baggy pants talking about how solos and practicing take away from their music! I'm sure those guys sell a lot of issues, but I know there is a whole other demographic of musicians out there who will be glad to see you stop pandering to poor musicianship. God knows there are plenty of great players out there who deserve and need the exposure. I



hope I'm not reading too much into a great issue, but I am eagerly awaiting the next.

Michael McCollum
Boerne, Texas

Stompin'

I want to start out by saying thank you for all the years of enjoyment you've given me and countless other guitar heads. I was very grateful for your article on "The 50 Coolest Stompboxes" (Sept. '02). It brought me back to my early days when I used to chain together tons of these little monsters.



Anniversaire Spruce

Anniversaire Cedar

You did not mention the Electro Harmonix Graphic Fuzz in the line up. I felt it deserved some mention because it was a great unit that I wish I didn't get rid of.

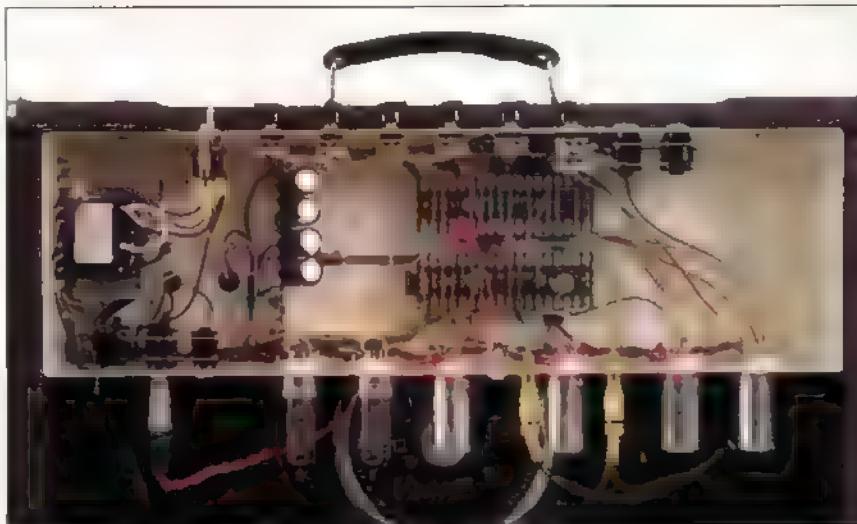
Timothy Glorer
Moorehaven, FL

Address correspondence to Feedback, c/o Guitar Player, 2800 Campus Dr., San Mateo, CA 94403, or e-mail us at guitplyr@musicplayer.com. GP regrets that until the advent of the 40-hour workday we will not be able to answer every letter.

Oops!

In "New Gear," October '02, we printed the wrong address for CBI Cables, while announcing their new product, the Woody. The correct mailing and Web addresses are: 6125 Country Seat Rd., Oriskany, NY 13424; [cbi-cables.com](http://www.cbi-cables.com). Sorry for mix up!

In our October '02 profile on the Cherry Valence, we mistakenly spelled the name "Valance." Apologies to the band for this regrettable error, but we simply glommed onto the spelling used for the cowboy sharpshooter Cherry Valance in the 1948 film, *Red River*, which starred John Wayne.



In our October '02 review of the Cornford Hurricane amplifier, we accidentally ran a circuit photo of the wrong amp—namely, the Soldano Astroverb. Though both of these class A combos use EL84 output tubes, the Astroverb has a printed-circuit board while the Hurricane features point-to-point-style circuit construction. For the record, here is the correct shot of the Hurricane's lovely, handwired interior. Our sincerest apologies for the confusion!



Celebrating 20 years of Seagull

About a year ago, Robert Godin found a supply of beautiful flame maple suitable for acoustic guitars. The marketing department—okay the marketing guy—said: "great let's make a very limited run of numbered Seagull 20th anniversary guitars. They can be drenched in abalone and we'll use tops that have been sun-dried on a mountain top in the Himalayas and we'll sell them directly to senior partners at law firms..." Robert reminded us that Seagull was not about, extravagantly-priced-bought-it-so-I-could-bragg-about-how-much-I-paid-for-it guitars, and besides, we're afraid of lawyers. Robert's idea was to hand pick from our best cedar and spruce tops, combine these tops with the flame maple—with a dark stain applied to the cedar model—and complete each with a beautiful high gloss lacquer finish.

We also wanted to include as many people as possible in the celebration and with that in mind we priced the S6 Anniversaire at \$495.

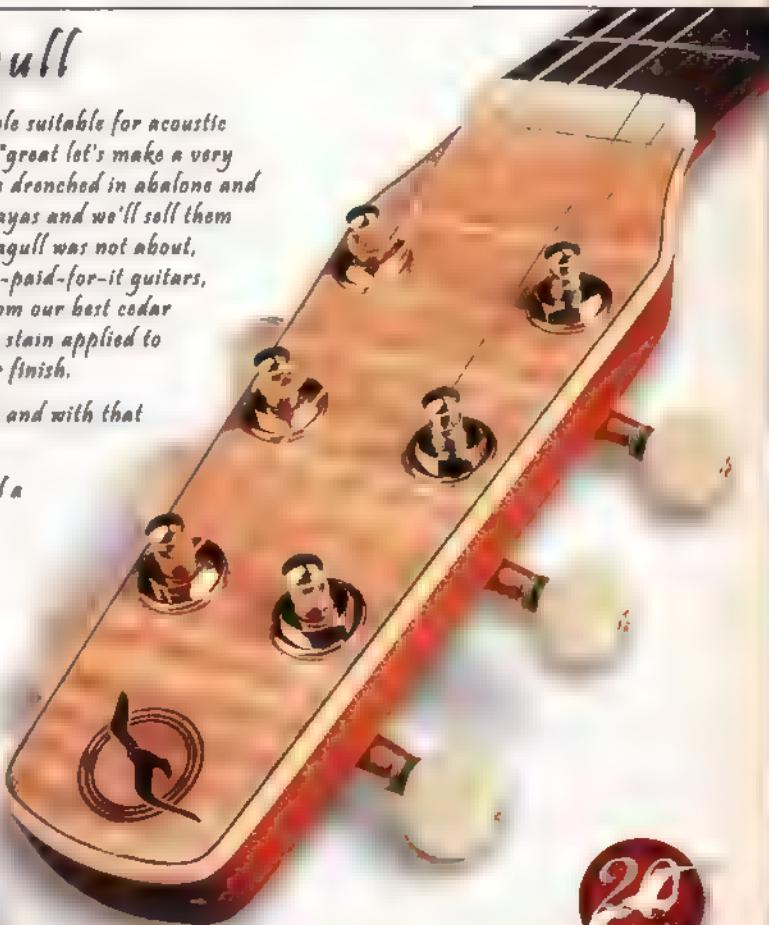
Each S6 Anniversaire comes with the revolutionary Fort EPP case and a certificate of authenticity.

Seagull guitars are made in Canada

*U.S. suggested retail price.



Fort EPP Case



www.seagullguitars.com



Fifty years ago, a small group of veteran guitar makers came together to form a new company. Its founder, Alfred Drange, had been born in Poland, and several of his key workers were immigrants from Italy, with its rich heritage of musical instrument craftsmanship. Among them, these men had decades of experience, and they had already built some of the most elegant guitars the world had ever seen.

For their new company, they picked the name Guild, which evoked the spirit of European artisan guilds of centuries past, and also suggested their shared commitment to excellence. In their original factory, on Pearl Street in New York City, and then in later factories in Hoboken, New Jersey and Westerly, Rhode Island, attention to detail was the order of the

day. Some guitars were built almost entirely by a single person.

What was remarkable about Guild was that it went on to build fine guitars in so many different styles—archtops favored by giants of the jazz community, and flat-top and electric guitars that became classics during the folk boom of the '50s and '60s, as well as the rock era of the British Invasion, folk-rock, the blues revival, and psychedelia.

Perhaps even more remarkable is that while these guitars were famous for their rich sound, beauty, and craftsmanship, they were equally famous for their durability and value.

Many of the world's best players chose Guild guitars for their uncompromised tone and elegance.

The New Guild Guitars... Made to be Played



And many beginners chose Guild guitars because of their affordability.

A half-century after the founding of this historic company, there's great news for players of all styles: Guild is back—the same elegance, the same affordability, the same classic models, plus some innovative new models—and this time, Guild is backed by Fender.

Fender has committed its full support and all its resources: environmentally controlled factories, a large and highly skilled work force, financial stability, its innovative R&D department, its famous custom shop, and its worldwide network of dealers and warranty repair outlets.

If you've been around awhile, you'll remember

the Guild Starfires, the Bluesbirds, the 12-strings, the beautiful dreadnoughts, the fabulous archtops. If you're a younger player, the Guild name may be something of a legend. But whatever your age, whatever your playing style, and whatever your budget, I think it's great news, for all of us, that Fender has brought back the quality, the original designs, and the value that made Guild one of the most distinguished names in guitars.

—Tom Wheeler
Author, Historian
and Consulting Editor,
Guitar Player Magazine



www.fender.com

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INPUT/OUTPUT

FRETWIRE

While watching the Beachwood Sparks show last September, I was reminded of the Rolling Stones. Not the incarnation that is presently wending its way around North America, I mean from 1967. Or maybe 1971. I'm not sure, since I wasn't around then, but neither was anyone in the band or at the show that night. I just thought the drummer looked like Keith Richards. The general consensus is that the Sparks really sound more like the Byrds. One thing is for sure though, this incredibly hip California band, and its adoring fans, are somewhat of an anachronism, with their shaggy hair and slim-fitting bell-bottoms. Heading home after the show (at which the Sparks did prove to be incredibly adept at folk-rock psychedelia), my friend commented on the sounds of Interpol coming from my car speakers. "They sound like all the stuff I've been dancing to for years. Meaning, Joy Division. No one sees this up-and-coming New York band without commenting on their familiar sound, and yet there is something so

AUCTION BLOCK Will Ray's eBay Strategies

AUCTION ITEM: 1950s Kay Stratotone WINNING BID: \$202.52

Every now and then I'll receive a guitar I wish I had never bid on, and this '50s Kay Stratotone is one of them. Although the eBay posting was accompanied with photos, they were very grainy, and I made the mistake of not asking the seller for better shots before bidding. When I received the guitar, I noticed several problems that were not addressed in its description. The biggest one was the discoloration in-between the two non-stock '60s/'70s Lafayette pickups. This was due to the fading of the guitar's finish everywhere except underneath the spot where the now missing original pickups used to be.

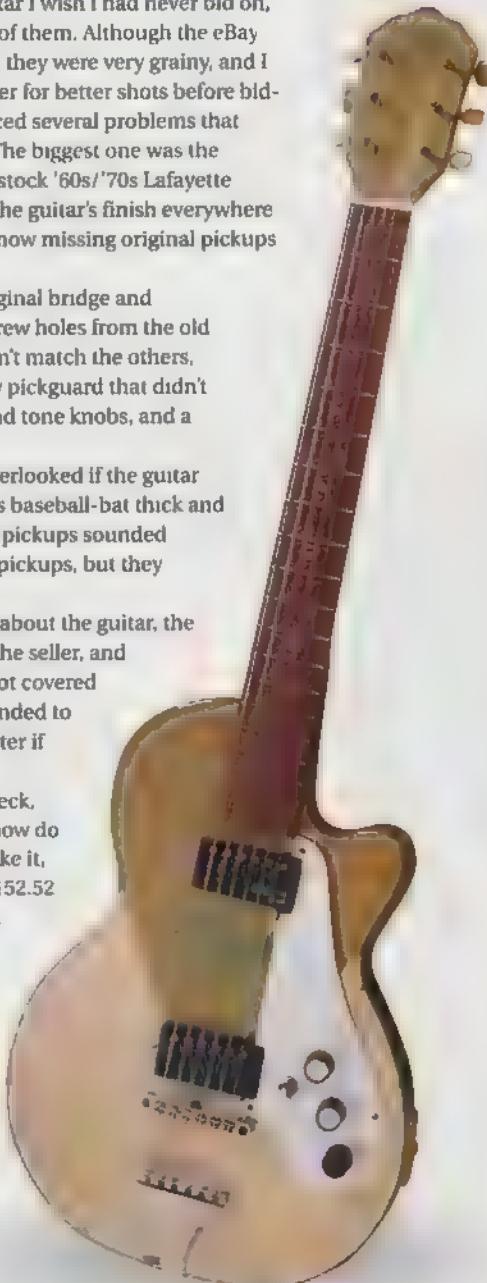
Other problems included a non-original bridge and replacement tuners (which exposed screw holes from the old tuners), a replaced tuner knob that didn't match the others, intermittent shorts in the wiring, a new pickguard that didn't quite fit, cheap replacement volume and tone knobs, and a crooked tailpiece.

Most of these problems could be overlooked if the guitar played great, but it didn't. The neck was baseball-bat thick and difficult to play. Plus, the two Lafayette pickups sounded weak. (The seller did send the original pickups, but they didn't work.)

Needless to say, the more I thought about the guitar, the more I felt I had overpaid. I contacted the seller, and gave him a list of problems that were not covered in his description. I also told him I intended to keep the guitar, but would feel a lot better if he refunded \$50.

A week later, the seller sent me a check, and I sent him a thank you e-mail. So how do I like the guitar now? Well, I still don't like it, but as my final price was adjusted to \$152.52 (plus \$20 shipping), I feel better. I don't blame the seller, I blame myself for not doing the necessary homework before bidding. Next time, I'll ask for additional photos and more details.

*Will Ray can be contacted at willr@hellecasters.com. Look for his latest album *Mojo Blues*, and keep an eye out for the new Hellecasters release, *Essential Listening, Volume One* [Hightone].*





BUZZ BIN

Maná

"It's the most important album that we're releasing toward the end of the year," said Gabriela Martínez, a marketing vice president at Warner Music in a recent issue of *Billboard*. But the record in question is not a release from a U.S. mega star, it's *Revolución de Amor* [Warner Bros.]—the seventh studio album from Mexico's Maná. Although the band is not yet *People* magazine fodder in the States, its popularity has been compared to U2's in much of the rest of the world. Since its debut in 1987, Maná has won five *Billboard* Latin Music Awards and has also scored four Grammy Awards. *Revolución* is anticipated as the album that will break the band big time in America, and it boasts smoothly melodic and multi-layered songs, guest appearances by Ruben Blades and Carlos Santana, and the passionate guitar playing of Maná's Sergio Vallín.

"Each song on the album has its own personality," says Vallín, "so I just let my heart lead me to play whatever the song needed. I didn't pre-plan anything—I just let myself go."

One thing the band *did* plan, however, was using vintage instruments to produce what Vallín calls "an original rock sound." For his parts, Vallín played a '57 Fender Stratocaster, a Gibson Les Paul, a few Gretches, a Hermanos Conde acoustic, and various classical models. His strings are DR, and his amps included a Marshall plexi, a Vox AC30, a Fender Tone Master, and a Diezel VH4.

"It's very important that I create my own style," says Vallín. "I studied classical guitar, but I also play traditional Mexican music, as well as take inspiration from American guitarists such as Jimi Hendrix, Allan Holdsworth, and Eric Johnson. Maná is well-known for mixing rhythms from different countries, and



Vallín with a few of his "collaborators."

I was also inspired by how Paco de Lucía mixed things up on his albums."

Vallín also credits his use of acoustic and electric guitars—and classical and folkloric instruments—for forging his style. "It all comes through the guitar," he says. "The guitar is the

best way for me to communicate as an artist and as a person. When I hold it close to my body, I feel as if I am one with it. This is why I like to experiment with different guitars, because each one inspires me to approach the music in different ways." —MICHAEL MOLLEND



ANGELS

Henry Knowles

Henry Knowles, 44, of the Nardcore (Oxnard hardcore) band Aggression passed away August 29 after battling leukemia. Knowles was hardly a media star, but

Aggression was a very influential '80s punk band, and the act was finding new life after recently signing to Cleopatra Records.

Turk Van Lake

Jazz guitarist Turk Van Lake, 84, died of undisclosed causes in early September. Although he wasn't a leader of note, Van

Lake played with Benny Goodman, Sarah Vaughn, Eddie "Cleanhead" Vinson, and others. He also penned the liner notes for the 1999 release *Benny Goodman at Carnegie Hall, 1938: Complete*, stating: "Benny Goodman opened the door to Carnegie Hall for Duke Ellington, Woody Herman, and, most importantly, for jazz."

FRETWIRE

Intriguing in its new LP, *Turn on the Bright Lights* [Matador], that I can't help but enjoy it. While neither of these bands are original, there's something comfortable in their sounds, and knowing that the music is derivative doesn't always diminish the impact.

Though many will read this and argue that nothing original has actually happened in decades, the charts have been dominated the past ten years by hip-hop—which is undeniably doing its own thing—and technology has enabled dance music to take off in areas previously unimaginable. Rock hasn't been so lucky. These days, with the rise of the White Stripes and the Strokes being heralded as the return to garage rock (or perhaps a garage rock revival revival?), everything old is new again. Similarly, the '80s have returned with a vengeance in the form of multiple reissues and box sets, and the increasing popularity of electro-clash in the dance scene. While I might agree that nostalgia for what has come before is always around, I submit that the underground music scene is embracing that nostalgia a little more ferociously these days. Maybe we need things to be familiar. Having the country in a such a state of insecurity

Beth Orton's *Daybreaker* [Astralwerks] is a wistful mélange of droning guitars, beautiful string arrangements, and somber grooves. It's also her most organic album. Gone are the electronic elements that transformed her acoustic folk songs into a unique fusion of a bared soul and a communal dance party. But, however her songs evolve, her creative process begins with an acoustic guitar, her voice, and a dollop of inspiration.

How does the guitar figure into your songwriting process?

I write on a Levin acoustic. I just got it last year, and I adore it. It's a beautiful little fellow, and there are all these songs locked inside it. When I play live, I use a Martin D-28 that Ben Harper gave me—which was very kind of him. I think acoustic guitars are incredible, because you can write a song on one and take it anywhere you want. There are infinite possibilities—you can leave the song very sparse, or you can build layers upon layers of instruments and ideas. I also like that you can take an acoustic anywhere and create whenever inspiration comes to you.

Do the parts you play when you're developing the song typically end up on the finished record?

I pretty much play on the record as I did when I wrote the song. I play very simply, and I like a groove—even if it's a folky strum. I've learned that simplicity is the key. Ted [Barnes,

Orton's co-guitarist] is the one who embellishes the basic chords I write. He'll weave around them and harmonize parts and come up with little flourishes.

What was it like co-writing "Concrete Sky" with [ex-Smiths guitarist] Johnny Marr?

I just let him go and do his thing. He's so full of joy, and so accepting and so generous with his gifts. I had the verse melody and chords already written when we started jamming, but it was all very repetitive—I like that repetitive, hypnotic thing—and Johnny is very good at adding parts. So he found the chord inversions for the "Save my soul" and "Feel like I'm falling" sections. He knows how to take a song somewhere else.

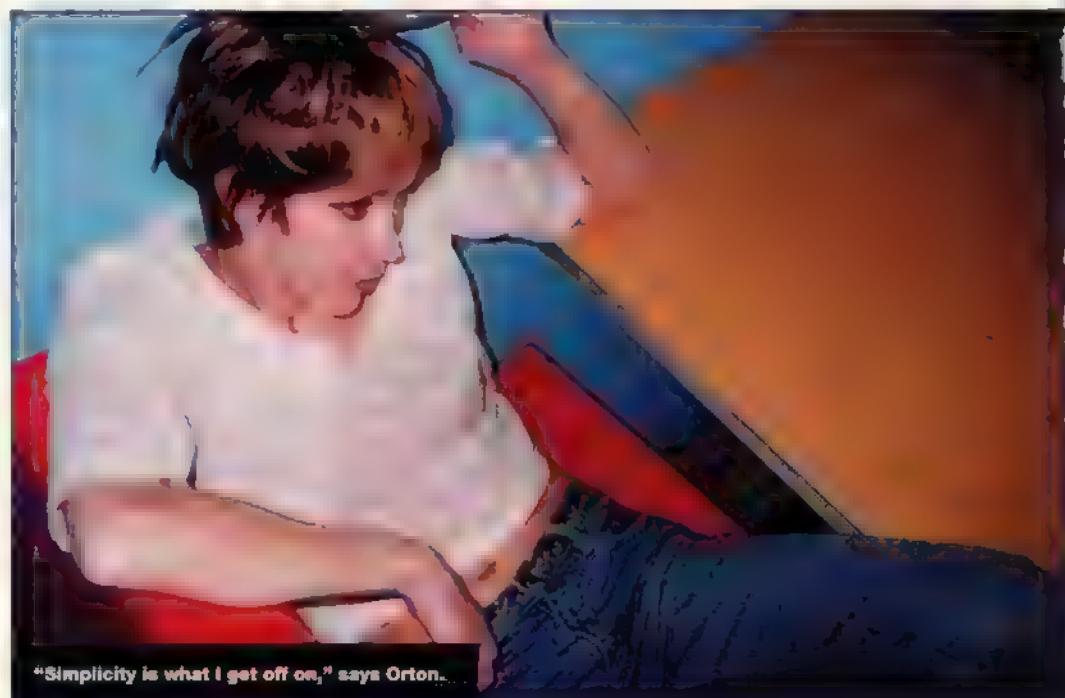
But you didn't have him play on the record?

Well, I wanted to use my own band, and I was also kind of scared that I could become too reliant on him if he was in the studio with me.

Is it sometimes difficult communicating your ideas to the band?

Not now, but in the early days, I was in a house full of blokes who were complete facists about guitar. I couldn't even sing over the racket they made. I just had to be true to myself, and not change to fit someone else's small mindedness. It's hard, though, because men are so vocal about what's right and what's wrong. You have to be strong, and build on your own resources.

—MICHAEL MOLENDA





SETUPS OF THE STARS George Thorogood

George Thorogood's longtime guitar tech J.J. Liberato has the challenge of not only making his boss' trademark Gibson ES-125 TDCs sound the best they can, but also finding new and original ways to stabilize them. Stock ES-125s have a tendency to go out of tune and feedback like crazy, so Liberato and his friend, luthier Dave Wilt, set out to address these maladies.

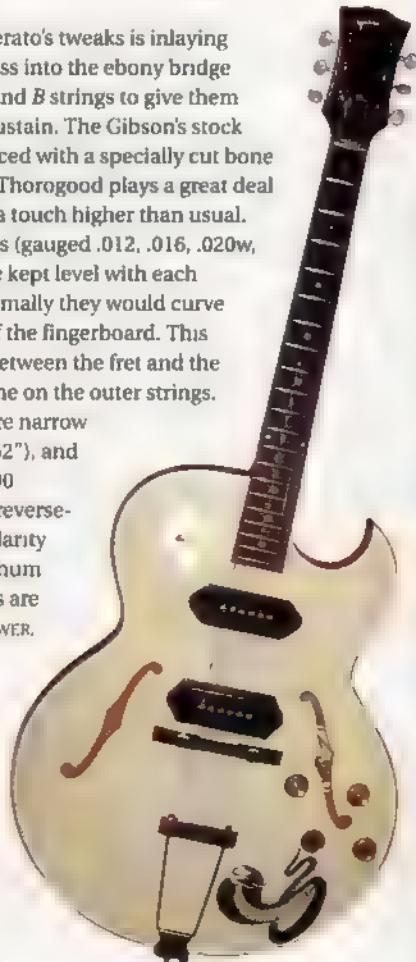
To cut down on feedback, Wilt custom fitted a wood block in the guitar that coupled the back with the top to tame vibrations. To help the guitar stay in tune, however, a number of things had to be done. First, to hold the trapeze tailpiece down and keep it from sliding around, Liberato screwed two small eyehooks under the rod of the tailpiece near where the strings attach. Then he took the end off the tailpiece, slid the rods through the holes of the eyehooks, and put everything back together. This modification keeps the tailpiece from moving from side-to-side, and it also holds it closer to the body to increase the angle and downward pressure of the strings on the bridge. In addition, Liberato glues emery sandpaper (grit side down) to the bottom of the bridge to further ensure tuning stability.

Another of Liberato's tweaks is inlaying small pieces of brass into the ebony bridge under the high-E and B strings to give them more clarity and sustain. The Gibson's stock plastic nut is replaced with a specially cut bone nut, and, because Thorogood plays a great deal of slide, the nut is a touch higher than usual.

The GHS strings (gauged .012, .016, .020w, .032, .042, .054) are kept level with each other, whereas normally they would curve to match the arc of the fingerboard. This means the space between the fret and the string increase some on the outer strings. The guitar's frets are narrow (.092") and tall (.052"), and the two Gibson P-90 pickups are wired reverse-wound/reverse polarity to cancel 60-cycle hum when both pickups are used.

—GARY BRAWER
brawer.com

Special thanks to Thorogood's stage manager and do everything guy, Joe Thomas.



STUDIO LOG

Jets to Brazil

Tracking "Perfecting Loneliness"



Album: *Perfecting Loneliness* [Jade Tree] by Jets to Brazil

Parts: All.

Guitars: Blake Schwarzenbach and Brian Maryansky.

Guitars: Fender Telecaster Deluxe, Gibson Les Paul, "thrift-store" double-neck 6/12-string (Maryansky); 1988 Gibson left-handed Les Paul Standard (Schwarzenbach).

Amps: Ampeg Reverberocket, Marshall JMP 100-watt half-stack, Vox AC30 (Maryansky); Ampeg Gemini, Fender Super Champ, Marshall JMP 100-watt half-stack (Schwarzenbach).

Effects: Electro-Harmonix Memory Man, Line 6 DM-4 Distortion Modeler (Maryansky); Electro-Harmonix Memory Man (Schwarzenbach).

Strings: D'Addario XL, .010 set (both).

Tuning: Standard.

Creative Concept: "This record was all about getting to know the Memory Man," says Schwarzenbach. "That pedal can turn on you, but when you get it right, it can deliver something really bitchin'—like the tight slapback in the song's first guitar solo. Sonically, I was going for something like 'Know Your Rights' by the Clash, and I just tweaked the Memory Man's controls until the vibe was right."

"My contribution was mostly counterpoint lines and ambient things," offers Maryansky. "I don't like my guitar parts to step on the vocals—I think great songs have the voice and lyrics upfront with a lot of musical bits coming in and out—and I usually try and do something that's not what Blake is doing. For the song's intro, I played my Tele through the Marshall and Memory Man, and I switched to the AC30 for the Clash part. The verses are two Ampeg Reverberockets with their tremolos set at different speeds. One amp was panned hard left and the other hard right. The choruses are a Les Paul through the Marshall, and the ambient outro is the double-neck 12-string and a single Reverberocket."

"The song starts out desperate, and then it goes off into deep space," says Schwarzenbach. "So the first part is all close-miked Marshalls. At the transition, I switched to the Fender and Gemini amps for the sound of a 'grand apology.' We got pretty manic in the studio, and we dialed up sounds very quickly. It was a real guitar party."

—MICHAEL MULVANEY

INPUT/OUTPUT

FRETWIRE

makes us yearn for simpler times, and the best way to recreate that is to recreate the soundtrack.

Responding to the need for nostalgia this year—perhaps without even realizing it—comes the Baypop Festival, an event sponsored by *GP* (and some other fine groups) that takes place in and around San Francisco, November 12-17. The extravaganza features some original garage rockers—the Electric Prunes and the Chocolate Watchband—as well as Jason Falkner, Chris Von Snidern, and local heroes (the Orange Peels and Cell and Response). Now in its third year, Baypop lives up to its name, bringing some of the finest pop around to the Bay Area. To find out more about this year's events, click to www.baypop.com.

The music snobs of the world will always continue to think "things were better when...." And maybe in some instances, they're right. Meanwhile, bands such as the Beachwood Sparks and Interpol will continue twisting the familiar into something new, al-

better

—Emily Fasen

MY FAVORITE GUITAR PLAYER

Larry Coryell



35
ANNIVERSARY



"Here I am with the February 1978 issue of *GP* with Al Di Meola on the cover. This article was—and still is—a near-perfect bridge for rock players who actually have more depth to their talent than they realize, and who want to get into playing jazz. What probably attracts this type of overqualified rocker are the speedy single-note passages, but, upon further reflection, he or she will start getting into advanced harmony. Ultimately, the player will see that there's a particular vocabulary to jazz, just as there's a unique vocabulary to rock—with some overlapping, of course, because of the blues connection.

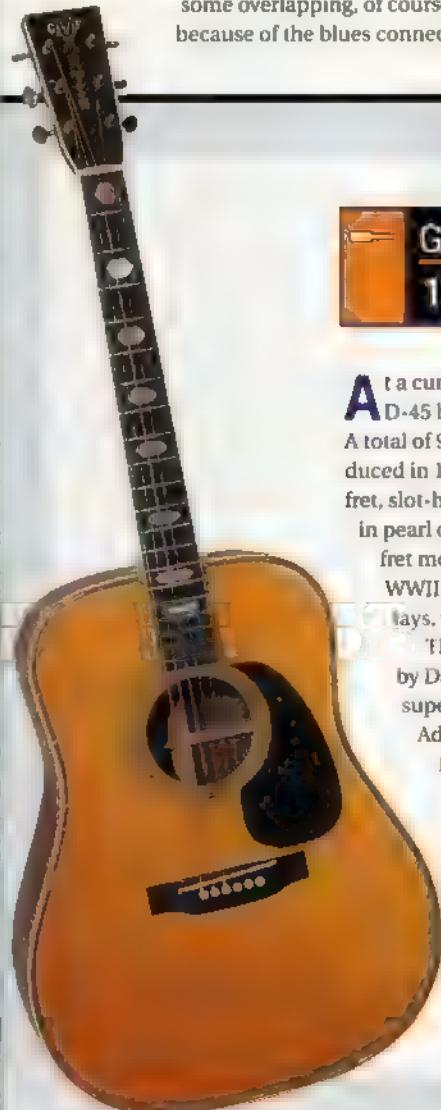


"The whole point I'm making here is that, although change is constant and imminent in this fast-paced world, a few basic principles still apply. Going back to this old *GP* issue confirms those principles for me. Now, when I'm teaching, I try to have a very open mind with all kinds of players, as well as understand that, regardless of what initial style they're coming from, they have the full capacity to raise their musical consciousness—both in technique and substance. And 'raising consciousness' in music has always been what *GP* has meant to me."

—LARRY CORYELL, SEPTEMBER 2002

GEORGE GRUHN'S RARE BIRD

1939 Martin D-45



At a current market value of \$175,000, Martin's pre-World War II D-45 brings the highest price of any vintage American flat-top. A total of 91 were made between the time the model was introduced in 1933 and discontinued in 1942. The first D-45 was a 12-fret, slot-head model custom made for Gene Autry (with his name in pearl on the fingerboard). The D-45 line soon switched to 14-fret models, and only three 12-fret D-45s were made before WWII. Prior to 1939 the D-45 had snowflake fingerboard inlays, whereas the 1939 model featured abalone inlays.

The guitar shown here was used on the *Tone Poems* album by David Grisman and Tony Rice. As with most D-45s, it's a superb sounding instrument. It features a mahogany neck, Adirondack spruce top with scalloped bracing, ebony fingerboard and bridge, ivroid white outer bindings, and Brazilian rosewood back, sides, and peghead veneer.

All style 45 Martins—regardless of body size—are greatly sought by collectors and musicians. Since its reintroduction in 1968, new D-45s have sold very well. During the Depression, however, the \$200 price tag put the guitar out of most customer's reach.

—GEORGE GRUHN gruhn.com

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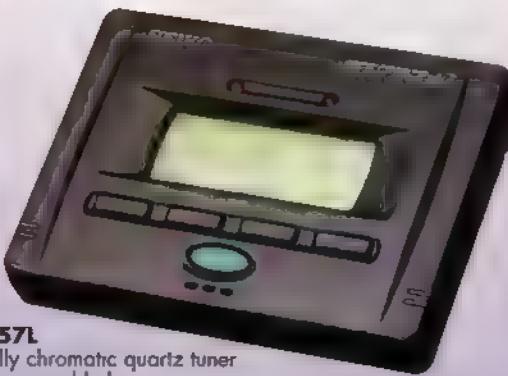
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SEIKO

PROFESSIONAL TUNERS & METRONOMES

If one can be damned by inspiration, then Robert Schneider is surely holding an e-ticket to Hell. The guitarist, songwriter, and producer of the Apples in Stereo has whipped his Brian Wilson jones into a boisterous muse that finds creative schemes in lo-fi sonics, Baroque counterpoint, and just about anything that makes a noise. For *Velocity of Sound* [SpinART], however, Schneider tamed his grand production ideas, and birthed a minimalist album that rocks hard and sounds smart.

Given your talent for uncorking marvelous layers of audio production, Velocity of Sound is downright terse.

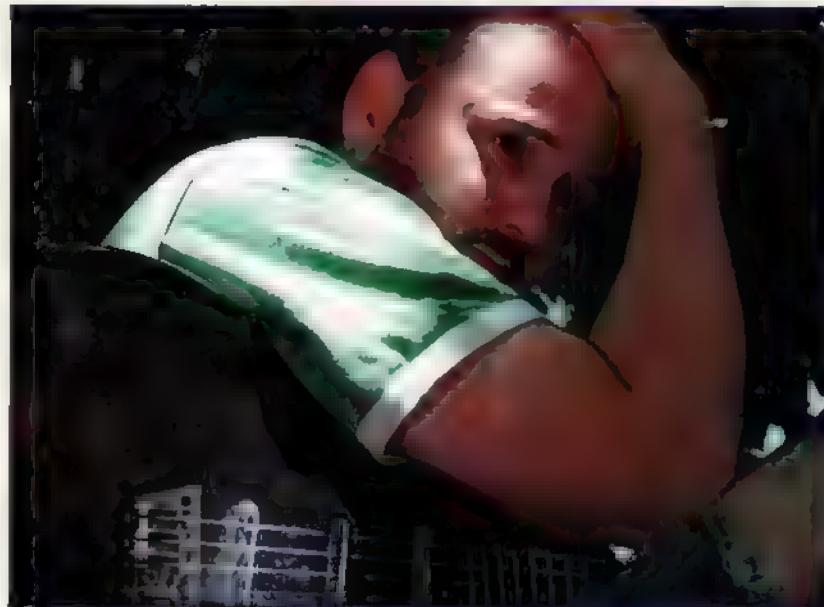
There's a lot of stuff I didn't fully flesh out because I realized that every single thing you add makes a song rock less. And to keep myself from going overboard, I had to make a strict rule that there would be no acoustic instruments on the album except for drums and percussion. No piano. No horns. We also thought it would be good to make a record that sounds like the Apples live. A lot of fans have actually been turned off by our concerts because our recordings sound like the *White Album*, and our live shows sound like Blue Cheer.

What were some of the other tricks or techniques you used to capture a live, gritty feel for the new record?

We recorded the basics live, of course, but we didn't record to a 2" deck, we used an old 1/2" 8-track. We kept a lot of first takes, and I ran the signals so hot that the red lights were flashing on every single piece of equipment in the studio. And when I wanted a super-fuzzy guitar tone—one that sounds like the speaker is blowing out of the amp—I plugged directly into a tube mic preamp and maxed out the input gain. Then I overdrove the channel preamps on my Neotek mixing console, and I also pumped up the gain on some old Universal Audio compressors. Finally, I hit the tape really hard. The result is the absolute best, over-the-top fuzz sound. It's like when you overdrive a 4-track recorder, only it's a 100 times fuzzier and yet more hi-fi sounding.

What amps do you use, and how do you mic them?

My favorite amp is the Silvertone Twin Twelve. It blows everything away! I also



"I tend to get obsessed with certain things, and then I get burned out on them," says Schneider. "So I'm always trying to do the opposite of whatever I did on my previous record. It's like, as soon as I get good at something, I can't let myself do it anymore."

use Vox AC30s, and little Magnatones with 8" speakers. I tend to place a Neumann U87 about four or five feet back from the speaker. I find the sweet spot by putting my ear at the same level as the speaker, cranking up the amp, and moving around until the sound is perfect. I like to use the figure-8 pattern on the mic, because it gets a fairly clean and dry sound off the speaker, and it also captures some of the delayed signal reflections from the back of the room. I think it sounds a little boxy when you put the mic right up against the speaker.

What about guitars and pedals?

I have a Silvertone fetish, but they don't travel well on the road—and they don't stay in tune—so I play Jerry Jones guitars, which look just like old Silvertones. I have a 6-string and a 12-string, and they're incredible instruments. I also have an old Silvertone acoustic. My favorite pedal is the Electro-Harmonix Big Muff.

How does your guitar player's head affect your producer's mindset?

I'm a guitar player first, and playing lead guitar in our band is a big part of what I do as a producer. I mean, I'm really into guitar playing. I tend to like stuff that has a rawer edge, even if it's by somebody

who's a virtuoso. I like to hear the guitar played in a way that transcends technique, even though the technical backdrop is evident. I love Hendrix. I love Peter Townshend. I love Eric Clapton. I love Dave Davies and George Harrison and Ed King when he was with the Strawberry Alarm Clock. I've always tried to balance my love of guitar on Apples' records. For example, I'd write hooky guitar riffs similar to Harrison, and I'd also use fat, soaring psychedelic tones like Clapton's when he was in Cream. It's always kind of difficult for me as a producer, because I love psychedelic Baroque arrangements and *Pet Sounds*, but I also love the incredibly loud, raw, sloppy kind of garage punk rock that's the way our band *really* sounds.

It's kind of funny that you produced a raw, stripped down record right smack in the middle of the garage-rock revival.

That's art for you. You think you're being really individual, and then you realize you're part of a movement. A few years from now, we'll see this raw rock thing as a reaction against sampling and techno. But when we set out to record *Velocity of Sound*, it was simply a production choice to record the band the way it sounded live. Weird, huh? —MICHAEL MOLENDA

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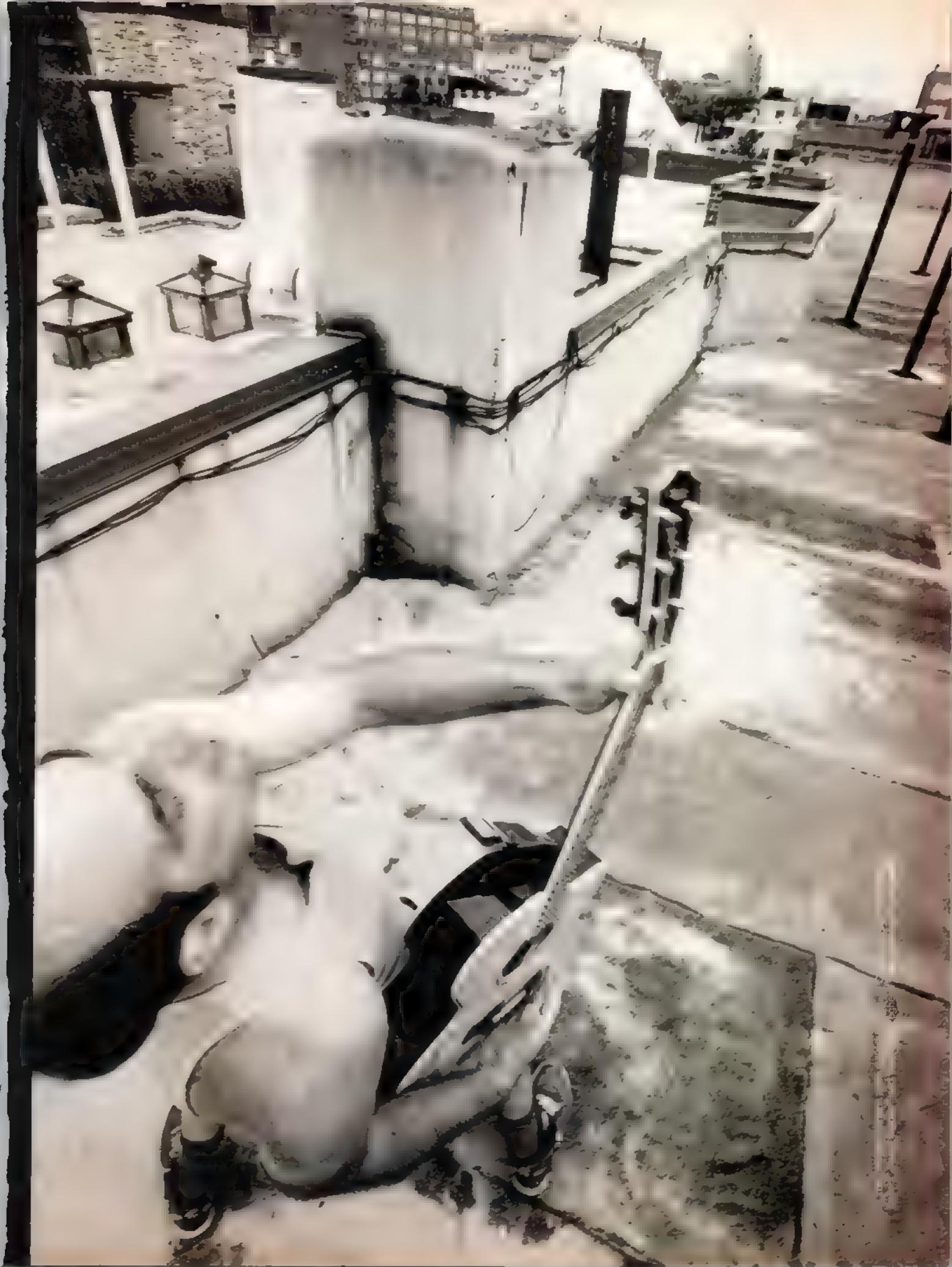
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By Kevin Owens



1. TRAYNOR

The 2x12 Custom Valve 80 (\$899) and the 4x10 Custom Valve 80Q (\$969) are the latest additions to Traynor's line of tube amps. Both models incorporate four 5881 output tubes, Accutronics reverb tanks, Celestion speakers, and recessed control panels. Other features include separate tone controls for clean and drive channels, a parallel effects loop with variable send and return, and a speaker defeat switch for silent practice or direct recording. **Traynor**, 4625 Witner Industrial Estate, Niagara Falls, NY 14305; (716) 297-2920; yorkville.com.

1



2. POMONA PRODUCTIONS

The Interactive Guide to Home Recording (\$59) could just as easily be titled "Everything You Wanted to Know About the Recording Process But Were Afraid to Ask the Surly Engineer." Whether tracking in your home studio or renting time in someone else's, IGHR walks you through the basics of mic selection and placement, reverb and effects,

2

compression/limiting, signal flow, EQ, level settings, and more. Also included are a printable glossary and useful documents such as track sheets, session planners, and mixing checklists. **IGHR** serves as a great primer for first-time recorders or as a touch-up for seasoned vets. **Pomona Productions**, 6922 Rush-Lima Rd., Honeoye Falls, NY 14472; (585) 582-1128; pomal.com.

4. ESP

The AC-200E acoustic-electric guitar (\$599) features quilted-maple top, sides, and back, a mahogany neck, and a rosewood fretboard and bridge. The abalone-outlined instrument also has an LTD piezo pickup, a 4-band active EQ, and an easily accessible battery compartment that swivels out from the control panel. Available in natural, see-through blue, and see-through red. **ESP**, 10903 Vanowen St. Unit A, N. Hollywood, CA 91605; (800) 423-8388; espguitars.com.



3. BIG BENDS

Big Bends Nut Sauce was designed to help prevent string breakage by reducing binding and pulling at the nut, bridge, string guides, and saddles. Regular Nut Sauce (\$10) contains Teflon and graphite in a base of thickeners and lubricants, and Light Nut Sauce (\$10) contains no graphite. Nut Sauce is odorless (good news for those who have ever smelled Teflon grease) and non-corrosive.

Big Bends, Box 324, Plainwell, MI 49080-0324; (888) 788-bend.

3





5. BLUES GUITAR FACTORY

Available in large and small sizes, the double-cutaway, hollowbody, neck-through Blues Guitar Standard (\$3,000) features a solid spruce top, maple sides and back, and a three-piece maple and perfelo neck with a perfelo fretboard. Available with standard or mini humbuckers, the Standard has a 3-way rotary pickup selector, dual volumes and a master tone control, and is available in such colors as T-Bone blue (pictured), Freddie red, and Elmore green. **Blues Guitar Factory**, 74-A Conselyea St., Brooklyn, NY 11211; (718) 388-0904.

DUCK

The ezLaminator (\$59) is a cold laminating system that doesn't require electricity or batteries. It seals documents in non-acidic, non-yellowing film, making them tear- and splatter-proof. The device even allows you to laminate banners up to 60 feet in length! To use the ezLaminator, just place your charts or lyric sheets in the feed tray, crank the handle, and cut the film with the built-in blade trimmer. **Duck**, dist. by Henkel Consumer Adhesives, 32150 Just Imagine Dr., Avon, OH 44011; (440) 937-7000; henkelca.com.



6. ACOUSTICS FIRST

The AcoustiKit Model 1014 (\$398) acoustical treatment kit comes with all the basic non-electronic ingredients necessary to convert an ordinary 10'x14' room into a personal recording studio. The one-box kit contains a total of 30 Cutting Wedge acoustic foam tiles and panels, two Bermuda Triangle corner traps for bass control, and two patented, binary array Art Diffusors. The 1014 also includes installation instructions and recommended layout designs. **Acoustics First**, 2247 Tomlyn St., Richmond, VA 23230; (804) 342-2900; acousticsfirst.com.

7. TOTALLY HUMUNGUS

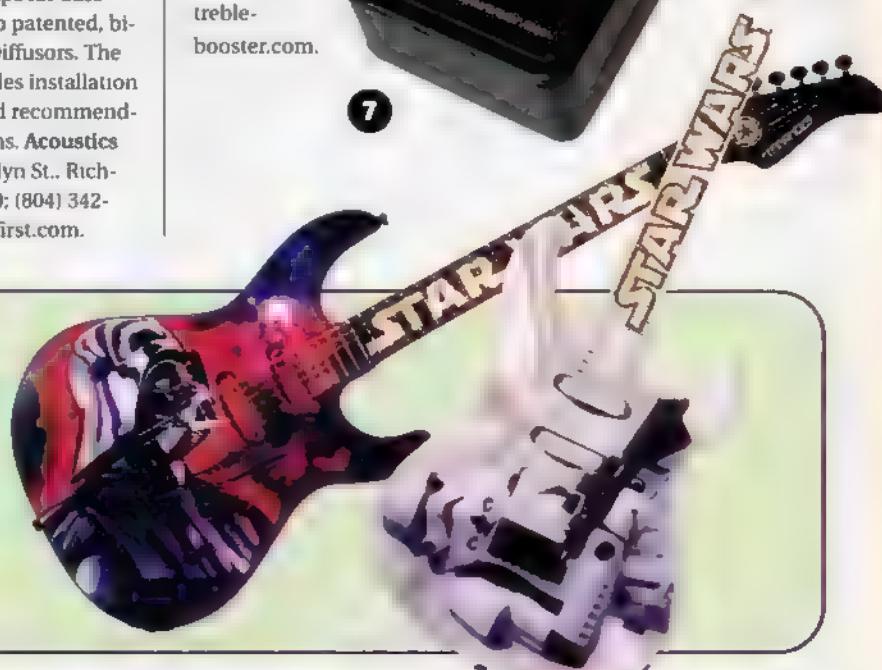
Scott's Crispy Cream treble booster (\$185, \$199 with true bypass switch as pictured) was borne out of its inventor's quest to sound like his favorite musician—Queen guitarist Brian May. Based on the same circuitry as the Dallas Rangemaster and the Vox Treble Booster, the hand-built Crispy Cream cleans up your tube amp's lower frequencies while distorting the mids and highs. **Totally Humungus Productions**, 3109 Dewey Avenue, Ste 9, Omaha, NE 68105. treble-booster.com.

New Gear is based on info from manufacturers. Coverage does not imply endorsement by Guitar Player. All prices and specs are subject to change. Manufacturers: Submit your press release and photo with list price information to New Gear, Guitar Player, 2800 Campus Dr., San Mateo, CA 94403.



FERNANDES

Fernandes will limit production of its collector's edition Darth Vader and Stormtrooper Retrorocket guitars (\$1,299) to 250 units each. The specially designed 25 1/2" scale Star Wars models feature alder bodies, maple necks, Fernandes Vintage Elite pickups, and 5-way pickup selectors. **Fernandes**, 8163 Lankershim Blvd., N. Hollywood, CA 91605; (818) 252-6799; fernandesguitars.com.



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Les Paul

Les Paul

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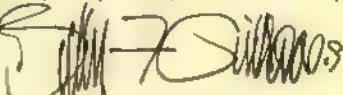
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Loud, Lynch of
Loud, Lynch

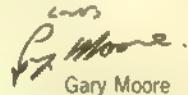
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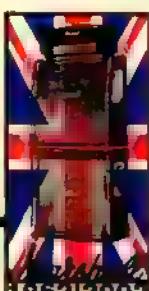
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Tony Furtado

Reconstructing Roots Music

By Andy Ellis

"I'm as big a fan of Blind Willie Johnson and Fred McDowell as I am of [uilleann piper] Paddy Keenan and the Bothy Band," says slide guitarist and banjo ace Tony Furtado. "I spend equal time listening to blues and Celtic music, so my songs fall somewhere between those worlds. I'll be writing a tune and suddenly realize, 'Whoa, this sounds like an Irish air, but I'm playing it with a slide.'"

Indeed, on Furtado's latest album, *American Gypsy* (What Are Records?), traditional modal tunes from the British Isles collide with prison work songs from the Mississippi Delta, swampy Americana, and serpentine fingerpicked originals. In addition to layering genres, Furtado likes to merge fretted-instrument techniques.

"I started on banjo at age 12," he explains. "Later, when I discovered slide guitar, I

brought over techniques that I'd developed on the banjo. For example, my right-hand picking patterns differ from Travis-style guitarists. I notice that many of them have a hard time breaking out of the root-5 thumb movement. But rather than restrict my thumb to bass accompaniment, I like to use it to help out with the melody. As a kid, I worked for hours on banjo picking exercises. I'd try to come up with the weirdest rolls and

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Tony Furtado

patterns imaginable, and that has freed up my right hand on guitar. Also, banjo has a tradition of mixing open strings and fretted notes within a phrase, so I apply that technique to slide."

For his acoustic work, Furtado uses a glass bottleneck and two vintage Martin flat-tops. "Both are 0-17s," he details, "which are all-mahogany guitars. One was built in 1930, and the other in 1944. I keep the latter in open-D tuning [D, A, D, F#, A, D], and the older one sounds killer in open C [C, G, C, E, G, C]. I use the same string gauges on both guitars—.015, .017, .027, .035, .045, and .056. I do a lot of intricate melodic stuff with the bottleneck on the first string, and if it's too light, it buzzes against the glass. Sometimes I'll even go with a .016 first string.

"I got into mahogany guitars years ago, after I saw Ry Cooder playing a guitar with a dark top. I've tried the 0-17s against spruce-topped guitars, but given their small bodies, these Martins sound bigger. Not as big and boomy as a D-28, but fat and sweet—perfect for bottleneck. I also play slide on an old Dobro 5-string banjo. That instrument has a guitar-shaped, resonator-equipped body and a banjo neck. It's wild."

Furtado also plucked two electrics on *American Gypsy*. "One was a '58 Les Paul, and the other

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was a reissue Fender '69 Strat with one Duncan and two Fralin pickups. I tune my electrics to open D and use heavy strings, gauged .014-.054. I always play the electrics fingerstyle, using a Golden Gate thumbpick and bare fingertips. But I usually wear metal fingerpicks on my index and middle fingers when playing acoustic.

"Onstage, I run the electrics into a Boss compressor and a Fulltone Full-Drive 2 distortion pedal. From there, the signal splits and goes to two amps: a Fender Vibramatic with a 15" speaker, and a Fender Deluxe Reverb with a 12" speaker. It took me ages to figure out my acoustic rig, but I've finally whittled it down to what works perfectly. Each Martin has a Baggs saddle transducer combined with a Sunrise soundhole pickup. The dual signals run into a little Sunrise S-B2 preamp, and then into two Avalon instrument preamps. I squeeze the signals slightly with a Behringer compressor, and then go into separate channels of an ART tube parametric EQ, which feeds a stereo Hafler power amp and two Daedalus cabinets. Each cabinet has a 12" and two 5" speakers, and they sound like cannons. I have them positioned behind me—with no guitar in the stage monitors—so I can crank up without feedback. It's beautiful."

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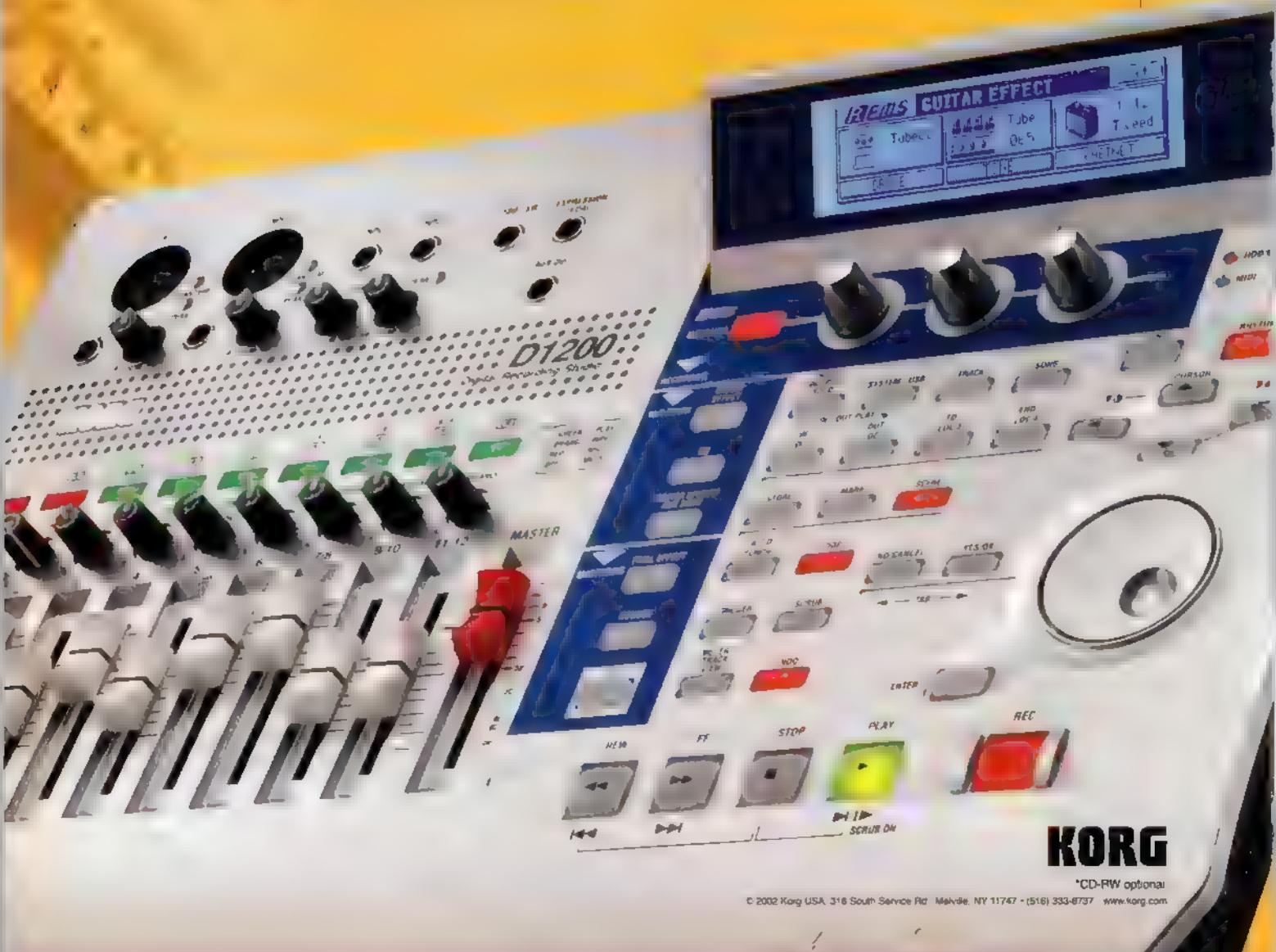
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The Dillinger Escape Plan

Organized Chaos

"A lot of people are sick of the same, watered-down metal," says Weinman.



By Barry Cleveland

The Dillinger Escape Plan's music bursts out of the speakers like a fire engine racing to a three-alarm blaze. Overwhelming at first, the hyper-speed-metal drumming, blistering guitar pyrotechnics, and nearly psychotic vocalizing are not just "in your face"—they knock you to the ground, run over you, back up, and run over you again. Dillinger's music is far from mindless mayhem, however—these guys can *play*—and despite the ferocious energy, their material is tightly organized and intricately detailed.

"Our music is really chaotic and aggressive, but there's definitely a purpose to everything we do," says guitarist and

The Dillinger Escape Plan

principal songwriter Ben Weinman, who formed Dillinger in 1997 to play music he found personally stimulating and exciting. "Every note we play—and every bit of noise we make—is strategically placed and has a purpose."

Though Dillinger is firmly rooted in punk and metal, the group's turn-on-a-dime time signature and tempo changes, unusual harmonic constructions, and polyrhythmic guitar parts are more characteristic of progressive rock and even jazz— influences readily acknowledged by Weinman. "Bands like King Crimson and the Mahavishnu Orchestra have been huge influences on us," he says. "They broke barriers, and

refused to be held to specific structures."

Unlike these bands, however, Dillinger eschews guitar solos. "I don't really see the point of soloing one particular player in the band," relates Weinman. "I feel like everything should be for the good of the whole. So, even though we do incorporate a lot of ideas and techniques that people might consider to be more 'lead' type things, they're used as parts, *not* solos."

Weinman doesn't use a lot of effects, preferring to get his tones directly from his guitars and amps. But with the recent addition of second guitarist Brian Benoit—a confirmed "effects dude"—that has begun to change. While recording *Irony Is a Dead Scene* (Epitaph)—a four-song collaboration between Dillinger and former

Faith No More frontman Mike Patton—Weinman experimented with dozens of effects, most importantly the EBow. And, inspired largely by the work of Richard James (a.k.a. Aphex Twin), he also has been using Propellerhead's Reason for composing and recording.

"Mostly I've been playing guitar into Reason and creating different types of soundscapes by manipulating the recorded sound afterwards," says Weinman. "For example, on 'Pig Latin' I recorded a bass line into the sequencer and edited it to make it punchier. Then I bounced the track to the recorder along with a click track, and had the bassist play over it. That enabled us to have a heavier, more distorted, and more electronic-sounding bass part, and have it perfectly synchronized to the drum track. We use the part live, too, by having the drummer play along to the click track."

Two current trends among heavy bands that Weinman *doesn't* have use for are 7-string guitars and dropped tunings. "Because we play such fast, aggressive music that's so chaotic, tuning down would just stop up the music," he says. "Some people put a little too much weight on how they tune their guitar and how many strings it has. There's a place for that stuff, but I don't think any of it is the answer to writing a good song."

Weinman's Guitarsenal

Guitars: ESP MH 301 and EC 300 (both with EMG 81 pickups)

Amps: Mesa/Boogie 3-Channel Rectifier Head, Mesa/Boogie 4x12 Rectifier Cabinet, Mesa/Boogie 2x12 Halfback cab.

FX: Boss NS-2 Noise Suppressor, Boss RV-13 Reverb/Delay, Line 6 Delay Modeler, Line 6 Filter Modeler, Heat Sound EBow.

Strings: Ernie Ball, gauged .010-.046.

As for the nu-metal scene in general, Weinman acknowledges that it has inadvertently brought attention to Dillinger's music. "The number of records those bands are selling is pretty impressive—especially as most of the music is pretty crappy," he states. "But a lot of people are sick of the same watered-down metal being rehashed over and over again, and for everyone who doesn't want that there's us."

Despite their considerable chops, most of the Dillinger gang are self-taught. "I've just tried to play with better guitar players, and that keeps you humble and makes you realize that you really aren't special," offers Weinman about how he developed his technique. "I think that's the key to always progressing—just never thinking that you're that great, because you never are. It just depends on what standard you're looking at."

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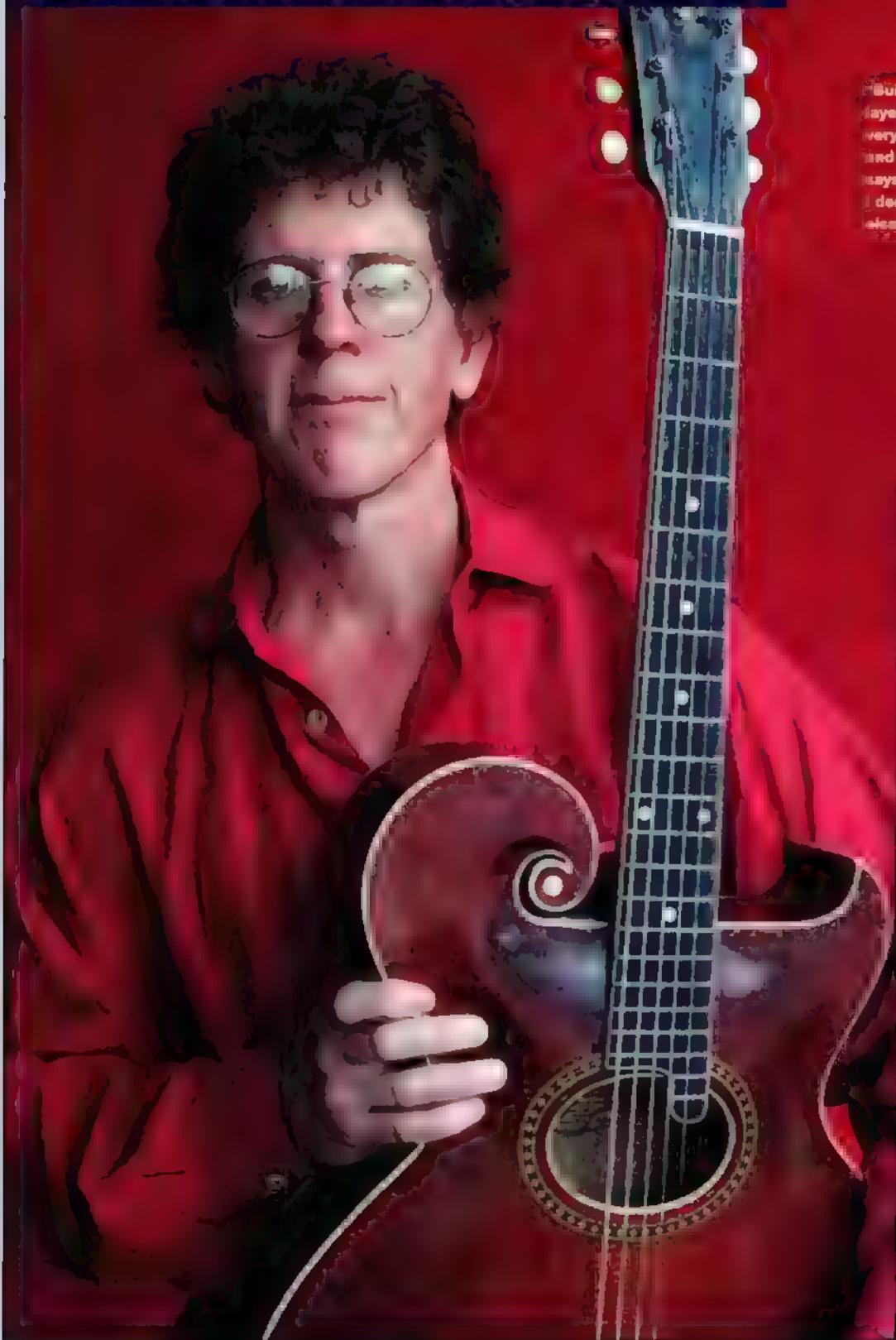
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Steve Tibbatts

Zen and the Art of Sculpting Sound



"Building music from layers of sound is very labor intensive and takes time," says Tibbatts, "but I don't have anything else planned."

By Andy Ellis

When Steve Tibbatts records an album, he doesn't track a dozen clever tunes. Instead, he molds sonic sculptures from gargantuan sheets of sound. His audio clay consists of shimmering 12-string bends, groaning Strat riffs, and bursts of white-hot feedback layered over rumbling percussion, spooky drones, and subliminal Zen chanting. Using a recursive process that's as unique as his music, Tibbatts created *A Man About A Horse* (ECM), by assembling, manipulating, deconstructing, and then reassembling hundreds of guitar, percussion, and vocal textures.

"Before touching my Strat or Martin D-12," he says, "I began building

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Steve Tibbets

rhythms using the *kendang*, which is a barrel-shaped Balinese hand drum. Using two ancient Roland S760s, I sampled taps and slaps from my four drums, and then sequenced different patterns I'd learned when studying *kebyar*—the gamelan orchestra—in Indonesia. One pattern, the *gilak*, turned out to be a real goldmine. I'd play it against itself, offsetting the rhythm by an eighth-note, a sixteenth-note, or a thirty-second note. I got all the beats on this album from that initial *gilak* pattern.

"I recorded these sequencer-generated rhythms on my old Tascam MS-16 16-track tape deck—which I love because it lets me work with pitch. For example, if I want a drum sound that's a minor third or fifth below the original, I raise the recorder's speed before rolling tape. Then, when I play back at normal speed, the drum

sounds lower. I've made a chart, so I know where to set the speed control for a specific interval. Like, if I want to drop a drum down a whole-step, I increase the recording speed by 12.2 percent. I go back and forth between the sampler and tape machine so much—looping, cutting, offsetting, and layering—that eventually I don't know where the sounds come from. It's like trying to find your camping spot by looking at a map of North America."

Once he had crafted dozens of grooves, Tibbets felt ready to wrangle guitar tones. "At that point it was just a big sandbox," he reveals. "Over different rhythms, I played phrases into the tape machine, the samplers, and MOTU's Digital Performer running on a Power Macintosh, and then worked for days transforming the sounds. I might sample a guitar theme with the S760, shift it down a fourth or fifth with the Tascam, and then slice it up with Digital

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Steve Tibbetts

Performer—maybe creating a fugue-like subject that I'd play against itself in reverse, an octave lower. Then, with my Marshall JCM 800 blasting, I made feedback loops—large swaths of shredding sound—and fattened them with similar tones, including horns I recorded while visiting a Tibetan monastery. They sound like overdriven guitars, but an octave down."

Tibbetts uses custom headphones to protect his hearing while tracking feedback assaults. "The guys at the local gun shop think I'm an avid sharpshooter," he laughs, "because I have five pairs of Browning ear protectors for varying degrees of attenuation. I've stuffed them with drivers from Radio Shack headphones, so I can monitor the recorded tracks. If you want your amp to sound like the speaker coils are starting to spin and fly off, you have to take it to that point. Amp modelers won't do

it—they just sound like sophisticated fuzzboxes."

Tibbetts' custom tunings contribute to the churning madness. "I have my Strat strung with GHS Boomers, gauged .011-.056. I drop the sixth string to C and the fifth to G, which yields C, G, D, G, B, E. I use the same tuning a whole-step down [B_b, F, C, F, A, D] on my D-12, but I have unisons on the top four string pairs. Bending the wound third and fourth unison strings makes the D-12 sound like a bowed instrument."

An ambient guitar pioneer, the 47-year-old Tibbetts has been recording and mixing his own albums for more than two decades. "Here's my sermon," he says. "Today, the average guitarist has access to better recording equipment than the Beatles used for *Rubber Soul*. It runs sideways to the financial interests of guitar magazines, but most people have enough gear. Instead of new toys, seek new adventures."

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How does Geddy feel about the SANSAMP RBI? Here's the story in his own words from emails sent to us during the marathon sessions for Rush's new Atlantic Anthem CD, *Vapor Trails*.

Fri. 10 Aug 2001 16:38:29

"I love the way it sounds. Nice depth and very controllable distortion. I seem to be able to recreate some of my old Rickenbacker® top end with it while using my Jazz®! But I still want to put it through the paces as far as checking the tone through various speaker arrangements and off of tape in a variety of mixing conditions to see how it cuts through. But, so far, so good!"

Best wishes,
Geddy

Tue. 13 Nov 2001 10:45:51

"I've been involved in some very tense mixing sessions lately and am getting great results with the RBI. It is definitely the best device I've used for controllable top end bass distortion and produces the top end crunch I need. Coupled with the other devices I use, I also get a little more bottom out of my overall sound. I am pleased."

Best wishes,
Geddy

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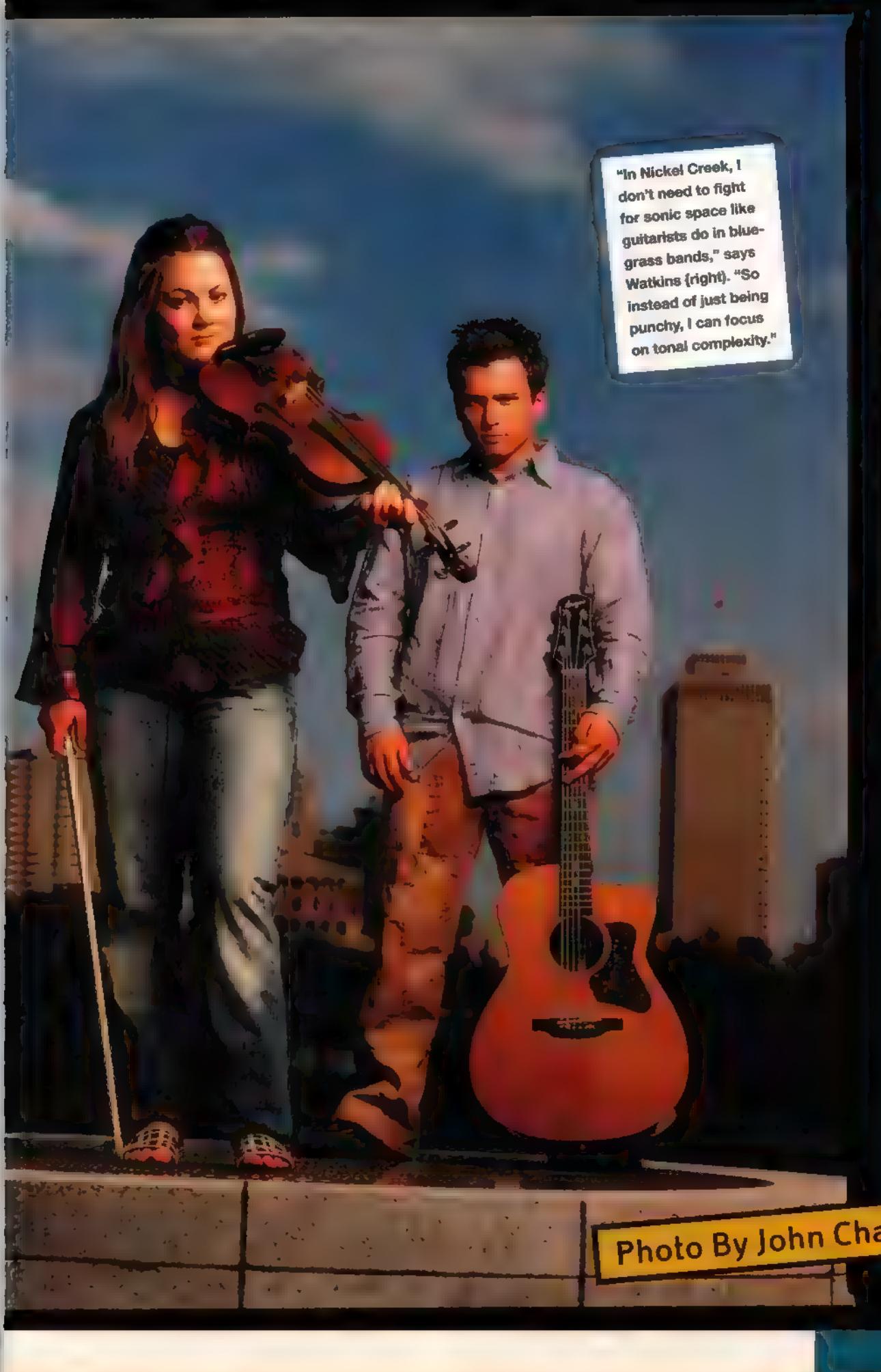
By Andy Ellis

Beyond Bluegrass

Nickel Creek's Sean Watkins
Gives Traditional Flatpicking
A Progressive Twist

I started playing piano when I was six," says ace flatpicker Sean Watkins, "and that has influenced how I approach chord voicings on guitar. Piano showed me the possibilities, so now I can't settle for the obvious fretboard harmony. I'm always searching for unusual sounds and fingerings."





"In Nickel Creek, I don't need to fight for sonic space like guitarists do in bluegrass bands," says Watkins (right). "So instead of just being punchy, I can focus on tonal complexity."

Photo By John Chaisson

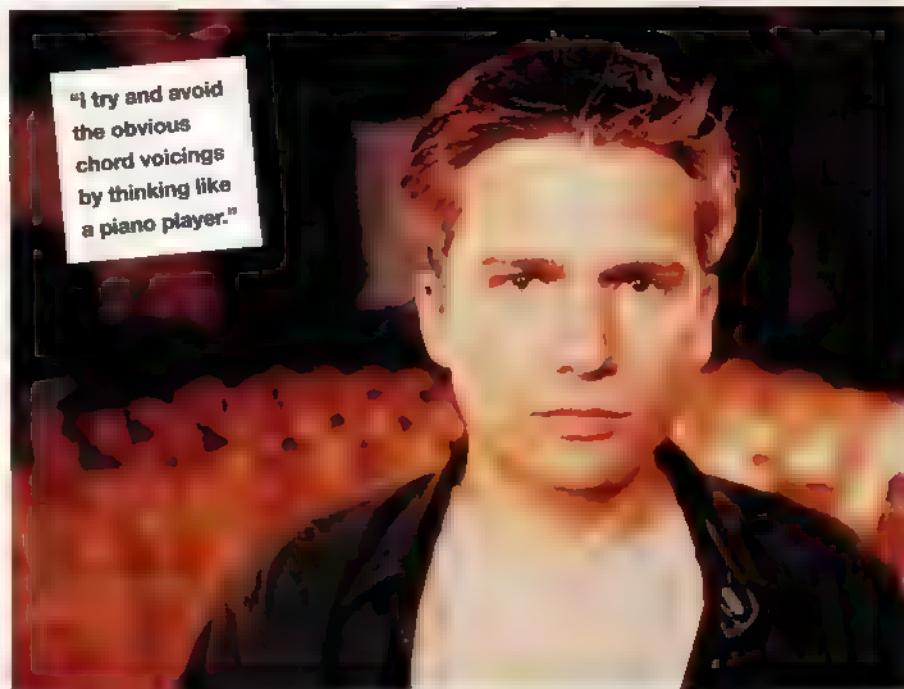
Beyond Bluegrass

As one third of Nickel Creek, Watkins knows a thing or two about blasting past boundaries. When they were kids, Watkins, his fiddle-toting sister Sara, and wunderkind mandolinist Chris Thile wowed audiences with their youthful take on traditional bluegrass. But before long, the young trio was weaving strands of rock, jazz, and Celtic music into their all-acoustic repertoire. Listeners lapped it up: Nickel Creek's self-titled debut album went gold, and the trio's latest effort, *This Side* (Sugar Hill), entered the Billboard Country Album charts at number two.

But success hasn't diminished the band's eclectic inclinations. Breathy vocal harmonies, rippling mandolin arpeggios, spry fiddle lines, and spanky flatpicked bass runs rub against spiky, Bernard Hermann-inspired string parts, odd-meter grooves, and groaning arco bass. In addition to thought-provoking originals, Watkins and his bandmates include songs by Pavement's Stephen Malkmus and the '70s Irish folk group, Planxty. Though Nickel Creek's music has traditional roots, there's nothing retro about the trio's sound or outlook.



At a time when bluegrass and country musicians are finding commercial success by



revisiting the past, Nickel Creek seems bent on exploring new sounds. What gives?

We play new music because we listen to new music. As teenagers in the '90s, we were inspired by contemporary bands, as well as the bluegrass greats. I learned to play guitar by

studying fiddle tunes, but in recent years, I've been into Radiohead and Counting Crows. So I suppose my guitar style is a natural synthesis of old and new. We're always trying to grow and evolve as a band and as individuals. For example, I work privately with Larry

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Beyond Bluegrass

Groupé, a film composer in Southern California. He critiques pieces I've written and he helps me with theory.

How has that affected your guitar playing?

It has taught me not to take the easy route. For example, the tune "Seven Wonders" is in the key of A minor. But instead of grabbing the usual Am voicing, I capo at the 3rd fret and play from an F#m position, but not as a barre chord.

Is that how you get the high, ringing pedal tone?

Yeah. I found that I could work the open first string—which, with the capo, is G, the b7 of

Am—into all the arpeggios.

Do you fingerpick or flatpick those arpeggios?

I use a flatpick the whole time, because I want the notes to be very even and articulated. When I play fingerstyle, I use my fingertips, which yields a mellow, less defined tone.

Many of the arrangements on This Side are very elaborate, with intertwined fiddle, guitar, mandolin, and vocals. Describe how a Nickel Creek original evolves from a kernel of an idea into what we hear on CD.

Typically, our songs go through three stages. We're together all the time, so if I've got an idea, Sara and Chris will hear me working on it—often at soundcheck. A lot of songs go by and nobody says anything [laughs], but, every now

and then, someone will say, "Hey, that's cool." I'll start singing what I've written, then Chris and Sara will join in. I'll teach Derek [Jones, the band's touring bassist] the chords, and after about 20 minutes, we might have a song to play that night. That's how "This Side" and "Green and Gray" started.

When it's time to record, we bring our new material to Alison Krauss, our producer. For five or six days in a row, we get together at her house and go through our live arrangements. We'll decide which songs we want to record, and

Wire and Wood

Watkins plays a custom Bourgeois

OMC, which boasts a beechwood Adirondack spruce top and Brazilian rosewood back and sides, instead of Bourgeois' standard Engelmann spruce and East Indian rosewood mix. Onstage, Watkins mixes his OMC with a Shure KSM-series large-diaphragm condenser, and he also runs a feed from his L.R. Baggs 15Beam bridgeplate transducer to the house mixing board via a Baggs Para Acoustic DI. An aux send routes his signal to a Trace Elliot TA 100P acoustic amp.

"Nickel Creek uses Trace Elliot amps as stage monitors," explains Watkins. "The audience never hears them. The amps face us on the floor, and supplement our in-ear monitors by moving air and sending vibrations through our feet."

Watkins' pedalboard consists of a Morley volume pedal and a Boss TU-2 tuner, and his guitars sport Elixir Polyweb medium strings (.013-.056). Watkins' flatpicks with purple Clayton Delrin XLS, gauged at a stiff 1.14mm.

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with Alison's input, we'll prepare our guitar, mandolin, and fiddle parts for tracking at a commercial studio. We don't experiment too much when we lay down the instrumental tracks—it's pretty straightforward.

The third stage happens when we transfer the basic tracks to Pro Tools, and start doing overdubs at Alison's personal studio. That's where the final touches go on. We'll work on a vocal harmony for two days, trying different ideas and

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Beyond Bluegrass

having fun. It's great to have the freedom to be creative without having to watch the clock.

Working with Pro Tools, you can come up with ideas on the fly because you don't have to rewind tape. One night, Chris said, "Let me try some string parts on 'I Should Have Known Better.'" Bam—he just stacked them up as fast as he could play them. They harmonize, but they're a little twisted. Pro Tools almost begs you to play with sound. In "Spit on a Stranger," we ran Chris' mandolin through Line 6's Amp Farm to get a guitar-like distortion.

How do you approach odd time signatures? Do you analyze and count them, or do you play them by feel?

We don't count unless we have to. If you have to think about the time, it's going to sound like you're thinking. We don't use odd time signatures to be weird or different. In fact, we try to make the

odd time signatures sound *not* so odd. Different voicings, keys, tempos, and time signatures are just tools to make a song better.

What about open tunings?

I've used DADGAD in the past, but on this record, I played everything in standard—except "Smoothie," which is in dropped-D tuning. But I definitely explore different capo positions and the voicings they suggest. To make a song sound interesting, I'll sometimes move my capo around looking for the hardest possible way to play it. On "House Carpenter"—which we got from Tony Rice's *Church Street Blues*—I tuned down a whole-step and played in a high capo position. I try to go where others might not.

Do you use different guitars in the studio?

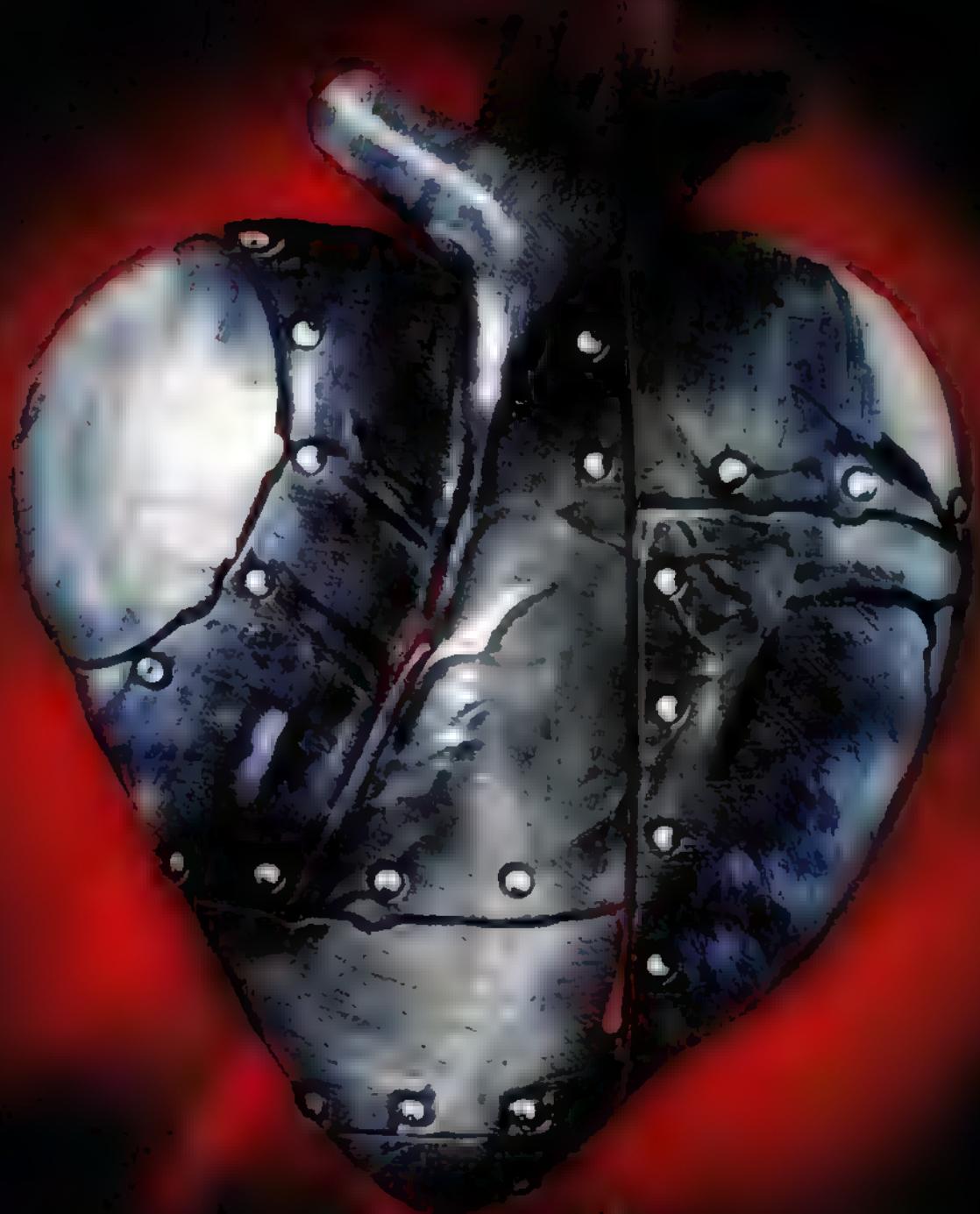
I did on my solo record, *Let It Fall* (Sugar Hill), but in Nickel Creek, I play one guitar live and in the studio—my custom Bour-

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geois OMC. I have a second OMC onstage, but I only change guitars if I break a string. We keep the gear simple so we can focus on our playing.

What draws you to Bourgeois guitars, and specifically the small-bodied OMC, which most people associate with fingerstyle music?

I like how the OMC is very balanced from bottom to top. Big herringbone dreadnoughts are amazing instruments for bluegrass—where you have to punch out your lines over Dobro and banjo—but in Nickel Creek, I can afford to sacrifice volume for increased tonal complexity. We all have our own sonic zone. I can't really get up into Chris' mandolin register, and upright bass and fiddle have such different ranges and colors from guitar that I don't have to fight to be heard. Because I play lightly, I can have my OMC set up with a low action and it won't buzz. Bourgeois guitars

sound modern—lots of high-end detail without a booming low midrange—which works well for what we're doing.

Instrumentally, Nickel Creek has a very transparent sound, even though there's a lot going on musically. How do you achieve that?

It has a lot to do with how we arrange things harmonically. For example, Sara might play the chord's major 7 as a fiddle drone. Chris could pluck the 3 and 5, and I could work sixths around that. We each end up with different parts of the chord—or one of us might play a note that's *out* of the chord. We approach it like classical music, where everyone has a specific, interlocking line or part.

But honestly, we don't think about it much. When we started playing together, Sara and Chris were six, and I was ten. We've grown up as a unit, so it's intuitive now. The music just appears. ■

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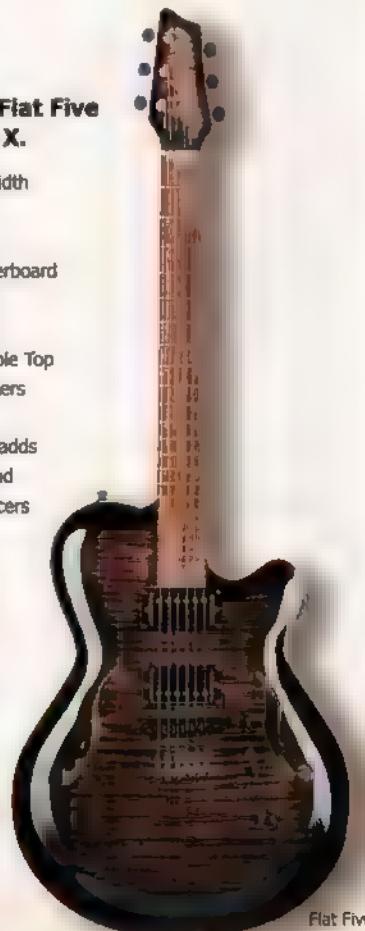
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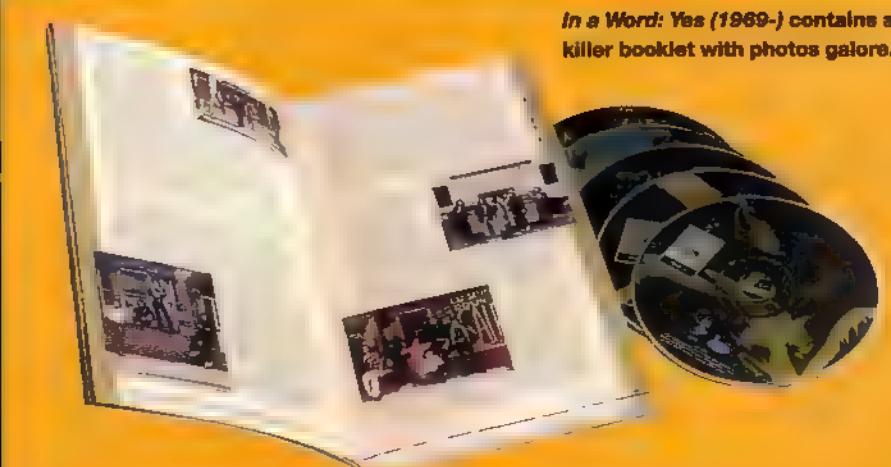
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right: a '59 Les Paul TV Junior (outfitted with Bigsby Palm Pedals), a '74 Les Paul Recording, a goldtop Les Paul, The Les Paul, a heavily modified '56 Les Paul Custom (note the four humbuckers), and a '55 Les Paul Junior. The mandolins in the front include, from left to right: a '60 Gibson Florentine electric mandolin, an F4, an '08 F4, and '10 A mandolin.

In a Word: Yes (1969-) contains a killer booklet with photos galore.



The Yes Album, '97



"I did virtually everything on The Yes Album with my Gibson EB-175 through Fender Dual Showmanamps and cabinets loaded with 15" JBL speakers."



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➤ A New Box Set Explores Steve Howe's Yes Legacy

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Without a doubt, Steve Howe is the godfather of progressive-rock guitar. His recordings with Yes were the pinnacle of prog-rock's beauty and excess. Howe's style—which encompasses everything from Tal Farlow-inspired angularity to ragtime acoustic flourishes—prompted countless players to set their sights high, both technically and sonically.

The new 5-CD box set from Rhino, *In a Word: Yes (1969-)* features a beautiful, photo-rich 95-page booklet, and enough classic Yes tracks to keep players busy as they peel back Howe's thick layers of guitar work. A career retrospective is business for a group with such a long history and shifting lineups, but *In a Word* is a great homage to Howe's legacy as a guitarist's guitarist.

You've always crafted interesting sonic layers with guitars. In your long recording career, have you ever come upon any magic combinations of guitars and amps?

There's an *endless* amount but I don't often repeat combinations, at least not purposely, because I'm always thinking something I haven't discovered yet is better than what I already know.

I'd love to say, "This guitar and this amp are great for chimey overdubs," but I view crafting tones as a constantly moving, experimental thing, not something you write in a book.

Yes has always had very strong personalities, both personally and musically. Has that been hard to deal with over the years?

Well, Yes isn't exactly my perfect group in the sense that I don't have 100 percent control—if I did there would be four very unhappy people [*laughs*]. I think there's an inherent problem with groups, in that sometimes very good ideas can get lost.

A good example is the title track from the *Magnification* record. The tune was basically two chords, and I find two chords quite boring. So I linked them together with jazzy passing tones and made it sound like 65 chords. Then I overdubbed some Wes Montgomery-style leads over that. Well our singer, Jon Anderson, *hated* it. Consequently you've never heard those guitars on that song. And the reason is because a key member's wisdom—or lack of it—told him to say "I don't want this song to go this way."

Now, I didn't want to make a jazz album, I just wanted to change-up the two chords. I thought the idea was bright, clever, and going to be a real buzz for guitar fans of Yes, but unfortunately they never got to hear it.

It's interesting that although you're an English guitarist who grew up in the '60s, you're playing largely eschew the blues. Why is that?

I found it distasteful—actually disappointing would be a better word—that rock guitar, which I feel had its own destiny, got so tied up in the blues. So much in fact that rock guitar was basically blues guitar for 20 years. I think that hindered the development of rock guitar tremendously.

The way I looked at it was, rock guitar has to keep developing—let's not let it stop at the blues. The blues is where I started.

Your steel playing displays some bluesy elements.

I've never been a distorted, wild player who bends strings, but as soon as I got a steel guitar, I became that kind of player on that instrument. That way the guitar is allowed to keep an authenticity that I enjoy. In a way I went to the steel out of desperation because my style didn't allow me to make those more wild sounds on guitar.

Are there any aspects of your playing you feel people have overlooked?

I haven't got a gripe like, "Nobody notices when I stand on my head and play," or something like that. But honestly I wonder if people understand the amount



Prog-rock heroes (left to right)—Steve Howe, Jon Anderson, and Chris Squire onstage in August 1977



of detail I try and bring to the music. Things like using various volume pedals to bring effects in and out, the use of other instruments like pedal steel—all that to me is detail, and detail is what I'm hell-bent on trying to present

After a gig, the majority of people I meet say the same thing: "You guys sound great." Of course I appreciate that, but that should be expected. I often go back to my hotel room and think, "Not one person said anything that really reached me."

Maybe they're just nervous meeting you and aren't sure what else to say?

I understand that. It's hard for people to really voice their appreciation for someone they enjoy. I met Wes Montgomery once and I could hardly say two words to him! So I know the situation of meeting someone you've enjoyed for years, and instead of saying something insightful, you generalize

What is it about the guitar that still excites you?

I'm not demeaning other instruments, but the guitar has more potential for the player to inject his or her personality into it than other instruments. What you bring to it is much more than you think. But you have to *allow* your personality to come through.

How do you facilitate that?

You have to understand that if you want something out of the guitar, it's not going to come from hoping. You have to treat the guitar with respect and practice with precision. That kind of preparation will sharpen your decision making skills about what and what not to play.

Why do you think nobody sounds like you?

I don't know if it's all that easy to copy what I do. I'm not trying to put myself above other people, I'm saying the intrinsic reasons that I sound like I do are pretty hard to fathom out. If you tried to copy what I do—and I wouldn't recommend it [*laughs*!—you'd have to retrace *why* I do the things I do. And I think that alone makes it almost a human impossibility to sound like anybody.

Almost all the acoustic guitar you hear on Yes records from the '70s is the Martin 00-18 that I

bought in 1968, including the guitar on "Roundabout." However, part of the original guitar track in the intro accidentally got erased after we already took down the microphones. Needless to say I was crushed! The release of *Fragile* has been mixed in 5.1 surround, so you'll probably be able to hear this now, but the descending run right before the band comes in had to be punched in and the tone of the acoustic doesn't quite sound the same.

Although I occasionally used my ES-175—on "Heart of the Sunrise" for example—the rest of *Fragile* was recorded with a '69 Gibson ES-335 Switchmaster. I bought that guitar when we were rehearsing for *Fragile*, and that was also the time when I began actively searching for different instruments.

YES MEANS NO

Trevor Rabin's tenure in Yes is both the group's most controversial and its most successful in terms of album sales and popularity. Many longtime Yes fans viewed Rabin's tighter, more orchestrated pop approach as an affront to the group's prog-rock legacy. The record-buying public, radio programmers, and fans of crafty pop, however, were elated with the group's easy-to-digest direction.

Since leaving the band in 1995, Rabin has turned into one of the most sought-after film composers in the business. His work can be heard in movies such as *Gone in 60 Seconds*, *Rock Star*, and *Remember the Titans*.

For the most part, Rabin has declined interviews regarding Yes for years. However, he did agree to speak to GP about the new box set and a couple of his classic Yes tracks.

Your time in Yes seems slightly under-represented in the box set

I was not consulted or even told about the box set until it was completed. Neither were Tony Kaye, Trevor Horn, or Bill Bruford.

Do you feel that was deliberate?

Personally, I feel that the 14 years I was in the band are represented in the most peculiar way. Some of the best material was strangely left off. There seems to be current members of the band who think Yes is only valid when they are in it. I don't feel that way. To me, the most important thing is that the historical context of the band is accurate, objective, and protected—no matter who the current members are.

What track do you feel was a glaring omission?

"Endless Dream" from *Talk* is one. It's funny, when we finished that song, Jon Anderson had tears in his eyes, and he told me, "'Endless Dream' is the best Yes song I've ever been involved with." So I guess it's appropriate not to put it on the box set [laughs].

In hindsight, what are your views on 90125?

When I look back at that album now, I think Trevor Horn's input was unbelievably valuable. He was the guy who told everyone that we weren't going to continue recording anything until "Owner of a Lonely Heart" was perfect. He wanted to get that single right because he knew the impact it was going to have, and how important it was for Yes at that time.

You mentioned to us in 1985 that it was tough giving up the production chair to Trevor Horn for 90125.

My role for that record was to write, play guitar, keyboards, and sing, but I definitely kept my eye on the production. But, in retrospect, I obviously didn't need to—Trevor was brilliant. Still, it was a very volatile time, and Trevor and I fought like cats and dogs—but for all the right

reasons. When we talk now, he says, "All I ever wanted to do was keep 'Owner of a Lonely Heart' intact and true to your original vision when you wrote it."

What surprises you the most when you hear 90125?

The freshness. When you hear a lot of stuff from the '80s it sounds like the '80s. 90125 somehow escaped that '80s stain.

What was the main setup for that album?

For guitars, I basically used my Strat and a Gibson Barney Kessel. Amp-wise, it was a 100-watt Marshall bass head through a 2x12 speaker cab. All the clean, palm-muted stuff was a combination of a direct recording and the Marshall. I also used a homemade pedalboard that included an MXR 15-band EQ, a Roland flanger, a Boss chorus, and a bunch of distortion pedals.



"The whole idea of 'Owner of a Lonely Heart' was to have a song that changed sonic dimensions drastically and very quickly," says Rabin.

How did you track the intro to "Love Will Find a Way" from Big Generator?

That's a couple of 12-string Alvarez electric/acoustics panned left and right. The guitar on the left was recorded direct and also miked. The acoustic on the right was all direct. Then I layered a clean Strat on each side, as well. The 12 strings were compressed very heavily so that the initial attack you heard was the Strats, and then the 12-strings would slowly creep in.

Would you consider another reunion tour with Yes like you did for the Union album?

In fact, we talked about another all-member Yes reunion tour quite recently. I'm actually very friendly with most of the guys in the band, but I enjoy my soundtrack work so much that I have no desire to rejoin them.

—DR

Steve Howe on Classic Yes Albums

"Before I even played guitar, I had listened to my parents' Tennessee Ernie Ford and Sam & Johnny records. That's where I first heard steel guitar. That sound hung in my mind forever, but it wasn't until around 1972 that I bought my first pedal steel—a She-Bud. That's why from *Close to the Edge* onward, steel guitar started to become a part of my sound. You can hear how enthusiastic I was about it on

"Also on 'Saben Khanru,' you can hear the Gibson ES-345TD stereo guitar. I used that instrument a great deal on *Close to the Edge* and *Relay* from *Topographic Oceans*.

Typically ran the front pickup through my Fender Dual Showman rig and ran the rear pickup through a Fender Fm.





Do you think gear enters into a player's stylistic thumbprint?

Somewhat. For instance, in the '70s I was using a very fat pick that was made of Plexiglas which gave me a different sound—fat, yet cutting. Also, the fact that I was using a Gibson ES-175 with Fender Dual Showmans through 15" speakers. Not many people were using that type of rig.

You used a lot of slapback echo on many of the early '70s Yes records. Did you print that or add it later?

In the studio I would always have an Echoplex or a Binson Echo-Rec around but we wouldn't often print it. I liked having more control and the ability to separate the dry guitar signal from the delay for a nice broadening effect. Printing effects was a dangerous thing back then. You were buying into something that you couldn't be sure was going to work. And with only 16 tracks to play with, you needed to be sure it worked.

You played a lot of acoustic guitar onstage in the '70s. That must have been nerve-racking.

It was. I would stand in front of a half-way decent mic, play, and hope the sound engineer would make sure it didn't feed back. There's an old picture of me at Madison Square Garden and I'm playing on Jon's vocal mic that a roadie would come out and lower! Sometimes I wonder how we pulled that off. Thankfully Barcus Berry came along with an acoustic pickup, so I started using that.

Are you a stickler for getting just the right tone on stage?

If I think my sound is good, I can play at the edge of my ability. If the sound isn't good, then I'm limited because the sound of my guitar is what drives me as a musician.

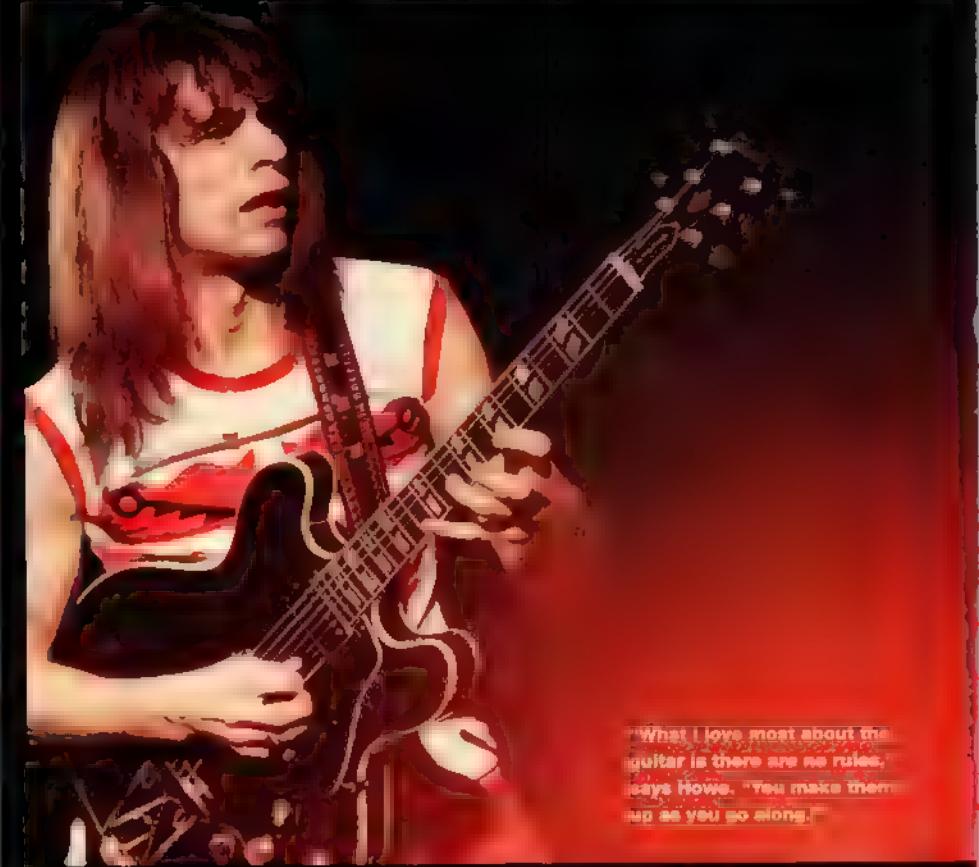
You've used the same ES-175 for years. Do you have armed guards watch it when you take it on the road?

My 175 is such a personal guitar I look after it myself. You can't just throw it in a flight case backstage and walk away, or leave it at someone's house, or leave it anywhere.

You're definitely in the minority. A lot of big-name players leave their precious vintage guitars at home.

There were a couple tours in the '70s when I didn't take the 175 out with me. On one tour I took a Super 400 and another year I took a Les Paul Custom—boy, was I disappointed. There wasn't one of those tours where I was happy about the fact that I left the 175 at home—that guitar just reeks of my sound and it epitomizes the way I play.

So I do take the risk that something might happen to it. This is my career and if I'm leaving my favorite guitar at home, what am I doing on tour? That guitar has assisted me and projected me musically throughout my life. To not have it onstage would be a great oversight to say the least! ■



"What I love most about the guitar is there are no rules," says Howe. "You make them up as you go along."

Steve Howe on Classic Yes Albums

Whereas most Yes albums are Gibson oriented, Howe's here to great deal on Fenders on R&B-influenced tracks. He says, "I was experimenting with Les Pauls around this time—particularly a black Les Paul Custom that I outfitted with four humbuckers. But after playing that guitar for a while, I found the Telecaster in relief to come back to because I liked its presence. The Les Paul always seemed to get squashed in the sound sandwich that is Yes."



*I noticed a problem during the making of this record. I began using Lee Faus's keyboard, and Rick Wakeman was changing his keyboards, as well as switching to polyphonic synths and the Polymoog. It was a constant struggle to get our sounds to mesh. Synthesizers in the mid-to-late '70s got really difficult to work with. They're very one-dimensional, unwieldy, and unsatisfying sounding. It was also a tricky time because it was the second record that we did without Eddie Offord, the engineer who did all of our previous albums. We were really grappling for an sonic concept, and that's a big reason why *Close to the Edge* is one of my least favorite Yes albums.*

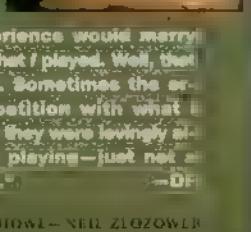


I've always loved the title track of that album. It topped all of my steel guitar ambitions. The tune is all lap steel tuned to open G. There's no guitar at all—that was very exciting for me. Still to this day when we get to the point on that tune where it builds up to a climax, it sends shivers down my spine.

"Another interesting thing about 'Going for the One' was that we mixed that tune 27 times! After the second mix, I said 'That's the one. We got it,' but nobody would listen to me. So after number 27, I stood up and said, 'Look guys, we've listened to number 26, we've listened to number 25, let's go back to number two. So we put it on, and everyone knew that was the one.'



His wisdom and experience would marry the orchestra around what I played. Well, that didn't always happen. Sometimes the orchestra was in competition with what I played, and sometimes they were lovinglyrowable to my guitar playing—just not a great deal of the time.





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THE WORLD OF THE WILD

TED NUGENT SHOOTS TO KILL ON CRAVEMAN

There was time when it would have been very hard to imagine that a guy wearing a loincloth and playing a jazz guitar at ear-splitting volume would one day become an icon of American rock and roll. Even harder

CALL OF THE WILD

to accept would be that said performer would sell more than 30 million albums, and then go on to become a spokesman for gun rights, hunting, law enforcement, and a litany of other conservative causes—

all the while continuing to maintain a career in show business!

Such is the life of Ted Nugent, who is not only a media personality, an author, and a publisher of his own magazine—*Adventure*

Outdoors—but also a formidable force on the rock scene. And we're not talking about playing oldies on the county fair circuit, either. The Kiss/Nugent tour of 2000 was one of the biggest money makers of the year, and judging by his high-powered new release, Nugent still has the chops and the drive to keep selling his brand of boogie on the road for as long as he likes.

Craveman (Spitfire) deserves a

taxidermy award for being stuffed like a trophy moose with ass-kicking grooves and high-velocity guitar work. It's an appropriately titled work for a man who lives life on his own terms, refuses to compromise his beliefs, and thinks nothing of firing flaming crossbow bolts into Gibson Byrlands.

Craveman reflects your classic sound, yet there's a modern thing going on, too. Were you consciously trying to explore new ground on this album?

It had nothing to do with that, as far as planning or approach. I just plug in. I'm a victim/perpetrator of my environment. I hate those environments that are not conducive to my fun factor—particularly when it involves music. You're a better judge than I am as far as identifying what is classic and modern. I'm a real reactionary, and I'm still blessed with this primal scream of rock and roll cravings. I crave the sounds and the pulses, and the emotions, and the performance and participation in the orgy that is my musicianship and my drive to please my fans.

So nobody sat down and mentioned the words "classic," or "modern" when we started this record—we just went in and rubbed our hands together like we were about to undress a cheerleader. What you identify as classic is something you can't stop me from doing. I could plug my guitar into someone's ass and the noise coming out their mouth would still sound like "Cat Scratch Fever."

Still, you can definitely hear a huge difference, between, say "Klstrphnky" and a more classic-sounding Nugent tune like "Pussy-whipped."

I suspect that what you're hearing in a modern sense had more to do with what my young drummer, Tommy Clufetos, plays—as well as the engineering and production work of Chris and Drew Peters from 40 Oz. Studios, where the album was recorded.

Do you have a particular method for writing songs?

Here's how it worked today. I cut the lawn, I shot about a thousand rounds of 10mm ammo, I tended



COCKED & LOCKED—NUGENT IN THE 1970S WITH HIS GIBSON BYRDLAND.



CALL OF THE WILD

the horses and put them out in the pasture. I shoveled a ton of dog crap, and I set out in the four wheeler to check out a couple of deer trails. Then I came up with this guitar lick, which is a bastardization of the riff I played on the tune "Fred Bear" from my *Spirit of the Wild* album. It goes *Am*, *F*, and *G*, but then I did a pedal tone through the whole thing while staying in the same

9th and 6th fret positions. It's an outrageous lick that sounds like "Stormtroopin'" meets "Fred Bear" meets "Klstrphnky."

What's the story with "Fred Bear"?

Fred was the man who reinvented bow hunting in the '20s and '30s. It's my favorite song, and we perform it with great passion every night. Another one of my favorite tunes to play is an instrumental called "Sunrise" that I

recorded spontaneously on a Fender Bass VI. It's a very mystical piece on the album *Hunt Music*, which no one in the music press even knows exists. I used the Bass VI on "At Home There" from the new record, as well

Do most of the riffs you come up with just pop into your head like that?

You can check this out with the guys in my band, but whenever I pick up the guitar, a new song comes out. And most of them are slam crakers. It's what I call the "Waterfall"—a tsunami that erupts on a daily basis.

I guess that explains why you're so prolific

I had 50 songs ready for *Craveman*. It comes from being clean and sober. That's the essence of a full life—using your gifts in an intellectual, spirited, and humorous fashion, and not letting those gifts be confused by destroyed signals from alcohol, tobacco, and fast food. I remain clean on all levels in my uncharted Lewis and Clark American dream—musical, sexual, spiritual, physical, earthly, and metaphysical. My life is beyond joyful, and I thank God every day for that.



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TONEWORKS | KORG



CALL OF THE WILD

That's why the album is called *Craveman*. I don't just love my wife, I *crave* her. I don't just *like* paddling across the lake when the sun is coming up, I *crave* it. These things give me a spiritual boner!

How do you tap into those emotions in the studio?

We play as if we're in a club and cut everything live—only a few of the guitar solos on this album were overdubbed. We're play-

ing for joy, and that's why *Craveman* delivers such attitude, fire, and tribal primality. My biggest battle—even in the studio—is to calm down enough so that my hand will go to the right place on the neck. I'm giddy with anticipation, and that's my real power.

Is there anything else you do to create a more stage-like sound?

I defy engineers and producers who try to clean things up. We like

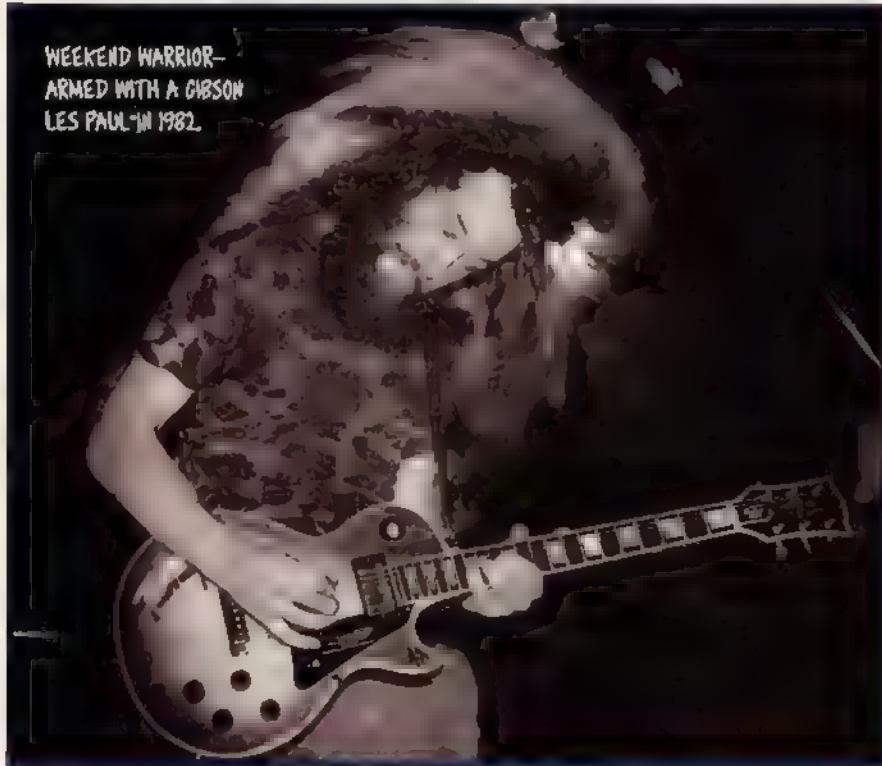
noise, we like sounds to ricochet, we like feedback, and we like noisy drums and gurgling bass lines. There just has to be depth, clarity, and integrity to the overall delivery.

The Red Hot Chili Peppers, for example, sound incredibly crisp and clean, but their individual instruments are noisy and offensive. James Brown made some of the dirtiest, nastiest recordings in the history of the world, but they're also some of the best recordings ever made. In the studio, you have to remain noisy, dirty, and obnoxious, but also full and rich. As a player, you can do

it all, and you *must* do it all.

What do you think of the 7-string revolution?

Thank God my radar dismisses meaningless bleeps! I've heard a couple of Korn things that I like, but I didn't know they used 7-string guitars. I love Nickelback and some of the P.O.D. stuff, and I know that a lot of that is detuned. I tuned down a whole step for "Kistrphnky," "Cum N Gitya Sum-O-This," and "Wang Dang Doodle," and the rest of the album is a half step down. I like the thickness that detuning provides, but I can't stomach that shouting



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IN THE CROSSHAIRS

After seven issues, here are some of his comments on artists who have influenced him—or provoked him—on stage and off.

THE ALLMAN BROTHERS

"There were a lot of bluesy people that I really listened to some of their jams at the Fillmore, and a good God—Is that some Black, Black soft Southern blues always seemed to be done by the music, all the beauty, and that's what made them so good."

JEFF BECK

"He always had great solos. [He] was an absolute master. I met him when the Zoots tour first came to the States. He's an older and a younger Jeff Beck, and that's a unique combination."

CHUCK BERRY

"I played bass for Chuck over a 10-day tour in South Beach, Florida, and that was quite an experience. Matching compars with Chuck's original music, and Jimmy B. Good's without a doubt the cuttiness. Not rock and roll now!"

ERIC CLAPTON

"He's certainly one of the most guitar players they've ever had—I love the man and I think he's a legend—but I think he was better than you can imagine."

EMINEM

"I'm not a fan of Eminem's vocal style, but for some reason [he] makes me feel good. When I hear him sing, the lyrics have this atmosphere of my life."

JERRY GARCIA

"He was never in tune and never in step. The guy just couldn't play! I tried to find work in the Grateful Dead because there were so many people that followed them. I kept wondering, 'What do they hear?' To this day, I still don't know."

JIMI HENDRIX

"I jammed with Jimi once. We had a few beers, and then I remember playing with him in a tiny dressing room somewhere, and another time, we jammed in a basement club that eventually became Electric Ladyland studio. Now, talk about enlightenment and inspiration!"

LED ZEPPELIN

"They really moved me. [They] influenced me. Black, and John Bonham and John Paul Jones' solid great homages to black music by creating the Pink Floyd's *Atomium's* '60s/70s-era studio band, and the originals. Similarly, Jimmy Page was doing an extension of all the Shady Motions he once wanted me to use."

MARILYN MANSON

"The man of the plenty, power, and intensity of him. His hand is obviously a hand of legal-looking instruments, but they make me laugh. The show is big, but there are also some great show pieces."

PRINCE

"He's a phenomenal guitarist and every another solo. Prince had my guitar [Mud] brother, Mud, working to bring my guitar into Prince's Paisley Park so he could check it out. Obviously, you hope Prince with a Paisley. He has that cool-Casanova, completely sleek thing going on with his entertainment elements, and he plays with his human soul; I have great respect for Prince."

KEITH RICHARDS

"What is Jimi Hendrix? Jimi was probably my first, then greatest influence. I can play every one of his licks from the first ten Rolling Stones albums. I was immensely dedicated to getting his tone—especially on his Chuck Berry stuff. I don't know how they used to get such great tones on those early records. The great factor of Jimi's tone is unparallelable."

BRIAN SETZER

"The single greatest Brian Setzer solo I ever heard is 'Love, Anger, and Pain.' He's truly one of the great guitar masters. Nobody compares to what he does—particularly in the '80s, '90s."

EDDIE VAN HALEN

"He's one of the greatest guitar players that has ever lived. But even more impressive are his amazingly-immaculate ones. What comes out of Eddie's guitar is really delivered straight to his ear. That's why Peavey and him to help them create the Eddie guitar."

STEVIE RAY VAUGHAN

"Stevie's guitar tone on an equal level with Jimi and Miles. In terms of soul, however, Stevie was a cut above. I played one of his Stevie ones, and I couldn't bend those strings to save my life. He had a .010 to .056 set on it, and I thought he'd given me that guitar just to break me a heart."

FRANK ZAPPA

"Frank was a total and utter master of guitar solos, and an exceptional guitarist. People don't know this, but I drove the Mothers of Invention all across Michigan in the Anthony Bates van during their '70s tour. We opened for them, and they were my parents. It was a terrible tour when Frank died. I still

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CALL OF THE WILD

thing. I'm not sure who is responsible for it, but a lot of that [shouts unintelligibly for several seconds] stuff—just shut up! The girls don't like it, therefore Ted doesn't like it. Shouting doesn't mean you're intense. It's fake vitality. I'd like to hear some of these shouters try to get as intense as Paul McCartney on "I'm Down."

Do you string your Byrdland more heavily

when tuning down a whole step?

Yes. I use a .011 to .048 set. We've been tuning down a half step since 1994. I found myself suddenly singing all the songs, and my guitar tech Dean Mitchell recommended I tune down. I was against it at first because I'm so stuck in my ways. But I tried it, and my tone was still crisp and fiery. Tuning down allowed me to scream my vocal riffs better, and it actually made everything sound heavier.

It probably allows your voice to hold up better, too.

CALL OF THE WILD

You'd think so, but I do two to three hours like that every night, and there's no scientific explanation as to why I hold up. I think it's sheer defiance and attitude—not to mention my vocal chords probably look like a series of middle fingers.

My energy level is not of the human species, and it all comes from discipline—that's what makes Ted Nugent's American Dream burn so intensely. No one—no matter what age bracket they're in—is more energized than I am.

I saw the Vines on television recently, and that's not energy—that's just silliness. That band is an illegitimate, three-legged puppy of Iggy (Pop).

What do you think of some of the other new garage bands?

I love the Hives, and, as Motor City kids, the White Stripes have got the goods, too.

What made you originally start playing a jazz guitar?

In 1960, my band the Lourdes opened up for Billy Lee & the Rivieras, who eventually became Mitch Ryder and the Detroit Wheels. On guitar was a tall, lanky mother named Jim McCarty, who played a Gibson Byrdland through

a Fender Twin Reverb. Man, I thought my balls were going to take off on the wings of an eagle! To this day, that's the guiding light for every performance when I pick up a guitar.

The stuff Jim played on songs like "Jenny Take a Ride," "Good Golly Miss Molly," "Devil with a Blue Dress On," and "Sock It to Me" determined the very style that you hear on "Stranglehold" and every other song I've ever played. That's why I play a Byrdland. The depth of sound that he got, especially at the low volume levels they played at back then, was unprecedented. I'd never heard anything like it. If you want to celebrate the soul of electric guitar in its optimum delivery, listen to those early Mitch Ryder albums. They're still the benchmarks.

So you basically took the McCarty model and added five more Twins?

Yep, and eventually it became eight Twins and eight Dual Showman bottoms. Do you know we never miked our amplifiers until 1975? We played to 100,000 people at some of those places and the sound they heard was coming right from the amps. I'm surprised I still have a head left. Still, my left ear is gone. I was smart enough to wear protection in my right ear as early as 1965 with the Amboy Dukes because I was getting so loud. I kept my left ear unplugged, but I tried to keep it away from the amps as best I could. Obviously, the damage was inescapable.

Why did you start playing solidbody guitars?

I switched to playing a PRS after Gibson started making crap in the late '70s. Paul Reed Smith was creating the most high quality instruments to be found at that time. I still use the PRS for a few songs: "Little Miss Dangerous," "Painkiller," and "Fred Bear."

You also played a Les Paul for a while.

Yeah, I think the first time I used the Les Paul was on *Weekend Warriors*. I still have two beautiful '58s that are just amazing.

You once said that nothing makes a guitar sound like a guitar as much as a Fender amp. What did you mean by that?

Well, the technicians at Fender were out for purity because Fender guitars had a sonic character that just needed to be captured and delivered—not altered. I think clarity was the driving force of Fender more than Marshall. Marshall was looking for a new depth, and God bless 'em for it because there's always room for improvement.

Why did you switch to Peavey amps?

What I'm aspiring to is the sound of a Fender Bandmaster with three 10" speakers. I got that with my Twins at an outrageous level, and that's what I get now with my 5150s. Each Byrdland has its own character, and through a 5150 that's what comes across. You can hear the difference when swapping guitars without even touching a dial. Hartley

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Feedback has always been a part of your sound, but have you ever found the Byrdland impossible to control?

Absolutely! And in order to dance on that precipice as I have for so long, one must fall into the chasm occasionally [laughs]. But I like the beast when he kicks my ass. I like to challenge myself. That's why I hunt with a bow and arrow—I want the beast to have the upper hand. There's a spontaneity and a raw nerve that my music represents, and the Byrdland really brings that out. You can't play certain passages on a Byrdland when standing in certain positions in front of certain amplifiers. But you also can't get those colliding tonalities and overtones on any other instrument.

What did you use for whammy bar stuff on the album?

The more extreme excursions are the PRS, but sometimes I just yanked on the Byrdland's tailpiece. On some of those intros, I let the Byrdland feed back, and then I added the PRS—I was really dive-bombing its twang bar.

The tremolo on "At Home There" is massive—how did you get that tone?

That was basically a Fender Tone Master, although we might have added some computer tremolo to make it sound even bigger. I was raised on "Mona" by the Rolling Stones, and I love that feel. I'm writing more songs with tremolo now—which are like bastardized Bo Diddley-type things. It's really primal, man. See, I've danced with the African natives after killing a lion. I've danced with the natives after eating the guts of a cape buffalo. No other musician would dare go there, and I alone am able to represent that in music.

Considering what you experienced in the '60s and '70s, are you bummed or inspired by what's going on in music now?

Will I ever feel what I felt when I first heard James Brown? Will I ever feel what I felt when I first heard "Paperback Writer" or "Soul Man" or "Jenny Take a Ride"? Thank God, yes. All eras provide fiery brilliance. Today we have the Red Hot Chili Peppers, Creed, and Green Day. I like Tommy Lee's new album, and I broke out in a sweat when I first heard the Hives. Cheap Trick's recent live album is just wonderful, and Aerosmith's new stuff is going to be the Godzilla of rhythm and blues. There will always be highs and lows in music, but I keep finding the highs or they keep finding me. Either way, I'm one happy, guitarslingin' son of a bitch.

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Carvin Really Neat-a Guitar Giveaway!



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By Julie Gold

LUSH life

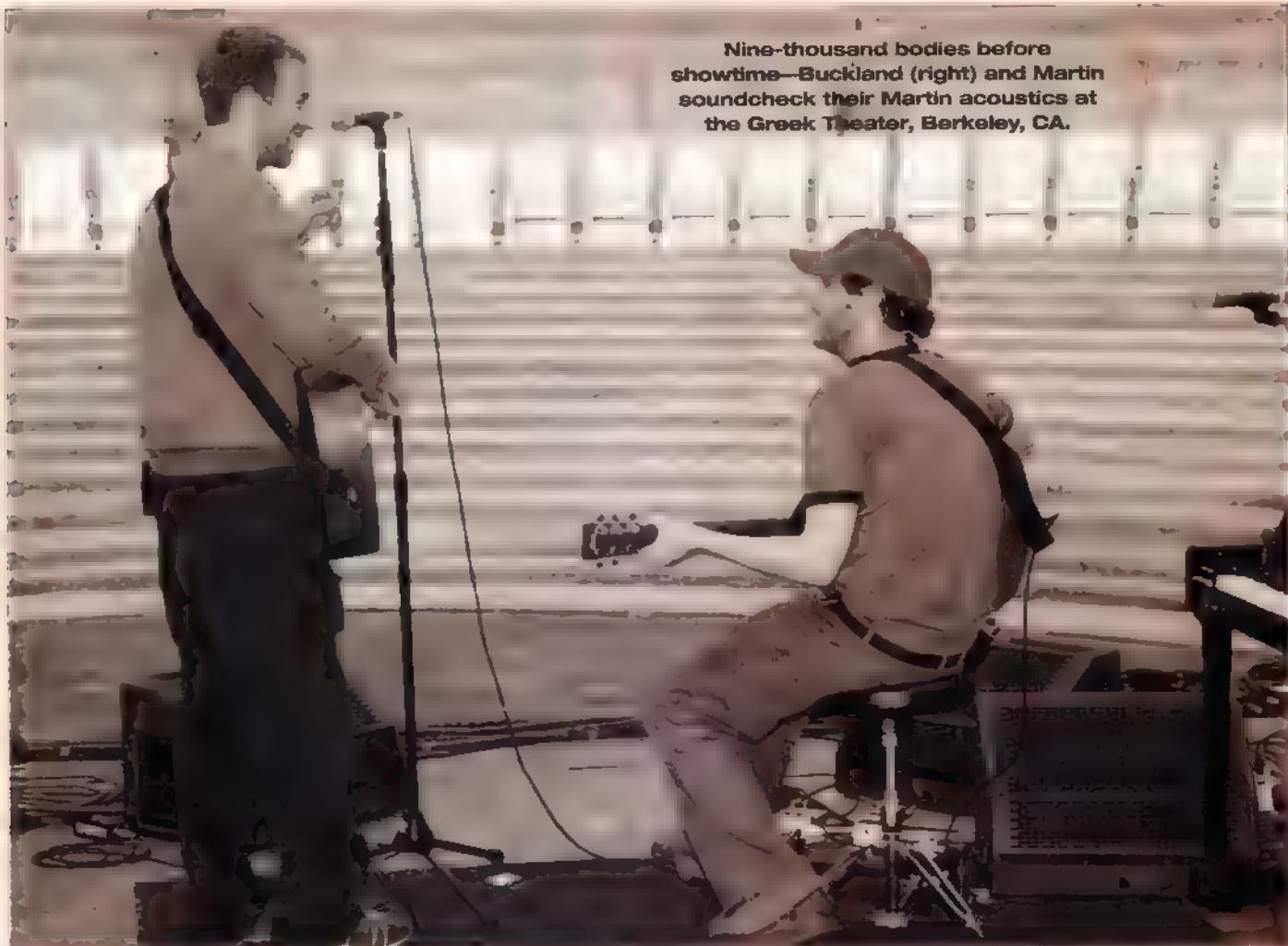
Jon Buckland's Shimmering Riffs Bolster Coldplay's Hypnotic Appeal

"My biggest challenge," confesses Coldplay's Jon Buckland, "is a broken string or a malfunctioning pedal. My life just isn't that tough."

No, Buckland hasn't been spoiled by the multi-platinum, Grammy award-winning success of Coldplay's debut, *Parachutes*. Nor has he let

the insane buzz surrounding the London band's follow-up, *A Rush of Blood to the Head* (Capitol) skew his sense of priorities. The reason the 24-year-old guitarist's day-to-day struggles are so trivial is simple: He has the primary focus of his life—writing kick-ass guitar parts—totally nailed.





Nine-thousand bodies before showtime—Buckland (right) and Martin soundcheck their Martin acoustics at the Greek Theater, Berkeley, CA.

Lush Life

"Truthfully, I feel ridiculous taking credit for them," says Buckland of the spellbinding riffs that are a huge part of the Coldplay sound. "So many of them happen by chance, or because someone in the band stops me when I'm playing and says, 'Hey, that's good!'"

While teamwork is crucial in any band, the fact remains that Buckland's charmed hands produce the lyrical, echo-laden guitar textures that dovetail perfectly with the mesmerizing vocal hooks and ghostly falsetto of singer Chris Martin. His style meshes perfectly with Coldplay's intriguing use of dynamics—an orchestral wash of quiet interludes, minimalist riffs, and acoustic piano parts.

What inspired you to pick up the guitar for the first time?

It looked cool. It was the late '80s or early '90s, and synth-pop was getting old. The guitar was an appealing alternative to all of that. My brother played, so one day I picked up his guitar and demanded that he teach me some stuff. It started from there.

Who were your early influences?

The Stone Roses, U2, and the Happy Mondays.

Lush Sounds

"Jonny's sound is really a three-man job," explains Buckland's guitar tech, Matt McGinn. "First, Dan Green, our front-of-house guy, comes onstage during soundcheck to fine tune the tones to suit each venue. During the set, I manually punch in several delay and reverb patches using two rack units—a T.C. Electronic 2290 digital delay, and a Lexicon MPX 62—which run in stereo through the effects loops of two Fender Hot Rod DeVille 410s. The third guy in the equation is Jonny himself."

Buckland's pedalboard—which was designed and built by Mike Hill—includes a Dunlop CryBaby, a Line 6 DL4 Delay Modeler, a Pro Co Rat distortion,

and several Boss boxes: an AC-2 acoustic simulator, a DD-5 delay, an RV-3 reverb, a TR-2 Tremolo, and a TU-2 tuner. While most of the pedals could be kept offstage, Buckland prefers them close, so he can kneel down and tweak settings on the fly.

"Each box is in its own separate effects loop, which makes things convenient if a unit fails during the show," explains McGinn. "I simply pull it out and replace it without Jonny having to stop playing."

The pedalboard also has footswitches to change the channels on the DeVilles, as well as a special mute switch that allows Buckland to change

guitars while echoes from the DL4 and DD-5 are still sounding through the amps.

Buckland's main guitar is a Thinline Tele, although he also uses a Martin acoustic and a Japanese Tele with the high-E string dropped to D (for "Trouble"). He plays slide on a Rickenbacker 12-string—with his slide hand over the neck—for "Daylight." For "Shiver" and "Yellow" Buckland uses a reissue Fender Jaguar, which receives a signal boost from an MXR Micro Amp.

"The loudest guitar is this amazing Gibson ES-335 with a DiMarzio humbucker," says McGinn. "Jonny plays it on the last song of the set, and then leaves it on the stand, screaming with feedback."

—JC

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I loved their guitar parts because they supported the songs so well. I thought, "I want to play guitar just like that," and I started by learning their chord progressions. My biggest influence was probably Kevin Shields of My Bloody Valentine. I was blown away by his amazing textures—especially on the album *Loveless*, which has layers and layers of guitars. I had never heard guitars like that, and I haven't since.

When did you begin playing with other people?

I've been in bands since I was ten, and all I ever wanted was to be in a *good* band. But when you're just a kid from Wales, it's hard to imagine that ever actually happening.

Did you ever dabble in other styles?

I took lessons for a few years and learned a bit of jazz, but when my teacher tried to teach me bebop, it just wasn't my bag. I was interested in *songs*, not improvisation. I wanted to build melodies and song structures.

You and Chris do that extremely well. How does the process typically unfold?

It always starts the same way, and never with the guitar riff. Chris brings in a song he has written—or at least some chords and a melody—and we evolve the song from there. Although we do build our songs around the vocal melody, every little part is as important as any other. The drum beat and the bass line, for example, are no less important than the lead vocal.

What kinds of parts do you try to add?

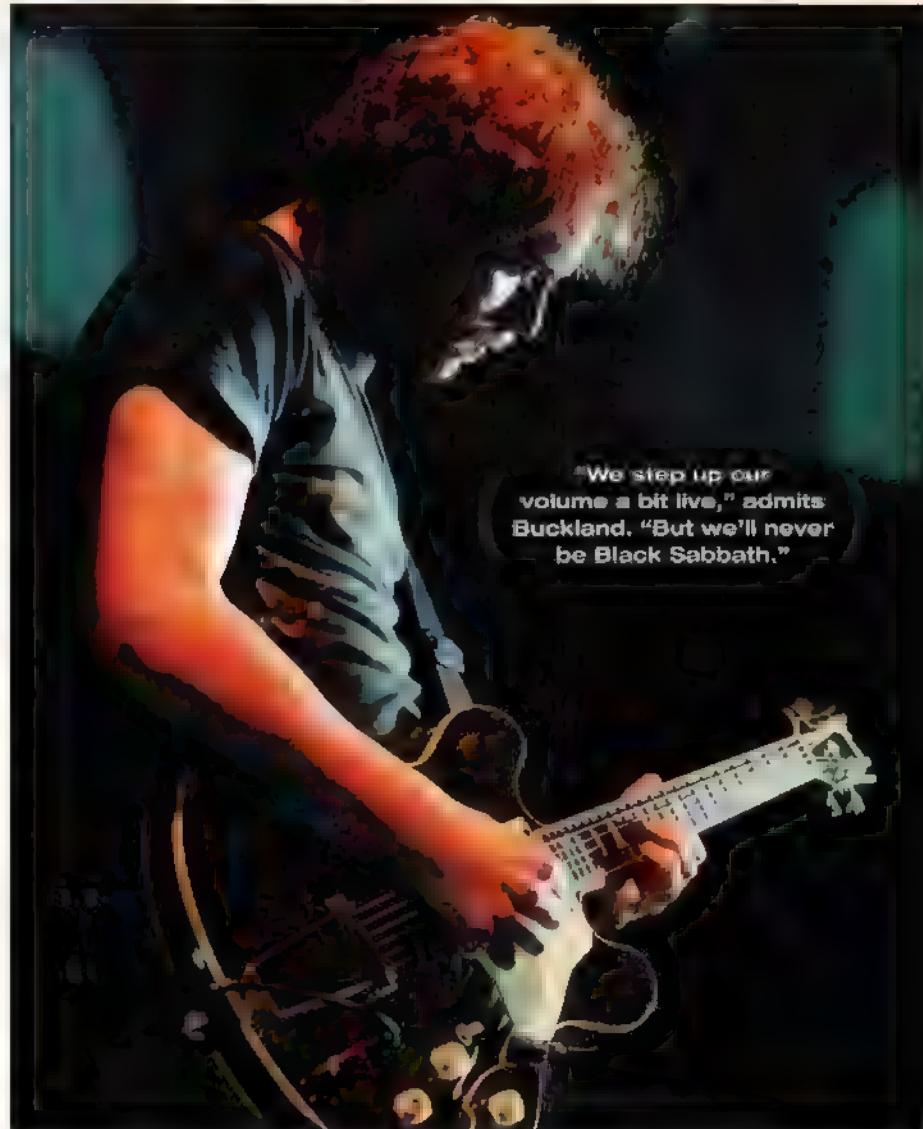
The challenge is always finding a guitar part that makes the song better without cluttering it up. I try to bring in a great melody or a new musical idea that doesn't obscure or weaken anything that is already there.

Your parts seem to flow effortlessly through the chord changes. Are they as effortless to write?

Some parts come in seconds, others take months, and others never come. The new single, "In My Place," came really quick, but then it should have, because it only has about three notes! "The Scientist" and "Daylight" were also really quick. Sometimes I have droughts where everything I play sounds cheesy and horrible, but I believe that if you like what you're playing over, you'll eventually find a cool part for it. The only time I worry is if things come *too* easily—that usually means they're crap. For that reason, we had to scrap the early sessions for our new record, because they were done while we were hanging out in London, being distracted, and not solely concentrating on the album.

How did you record A Rush of Blood to the Head?

Other than mixing it down to analog tape, it was pretty much all Pro Tools. One thing we learned from *Parachutes* is that recording to tape can be a very laborious process. For one thing,



"We step up our volume a bit live," admits Buckland. "But we'll never be Black Sabbath."

when you've done five or six takes of a song, you often realize the first one was the best. And if you're tracking to tape, you've already recorded over the first three takes by then!

What inspired the sprightly, almost African sounding riff on "Shiver"?

That's a good example of a part that came about by accident. The reason it's so busy is because I was playing a Fender Jaguar, and I couldn't get the guitar to sustain nicely without it squealing with feedback. I was forced to play lots of notes to keep it under control.

How did you come up with the lead melody towards the end of "Politik"?

I think Chris had originally sung that as a backing vocal. I just learned it on the guitar and played it. A lot of parts come from something Chris has suggested or sung to me. We really spark off each other that way.

How did you record "Clocks"?

For some reason, all the guitar amps in the studio decided not to work that day, so I was just laying down a scratch track using Line 6's Amp

Farm plug-in. What surprised me is that it actually sounded *good*, so we kept it.

You seem to incorporate a lot of open strings into your playing

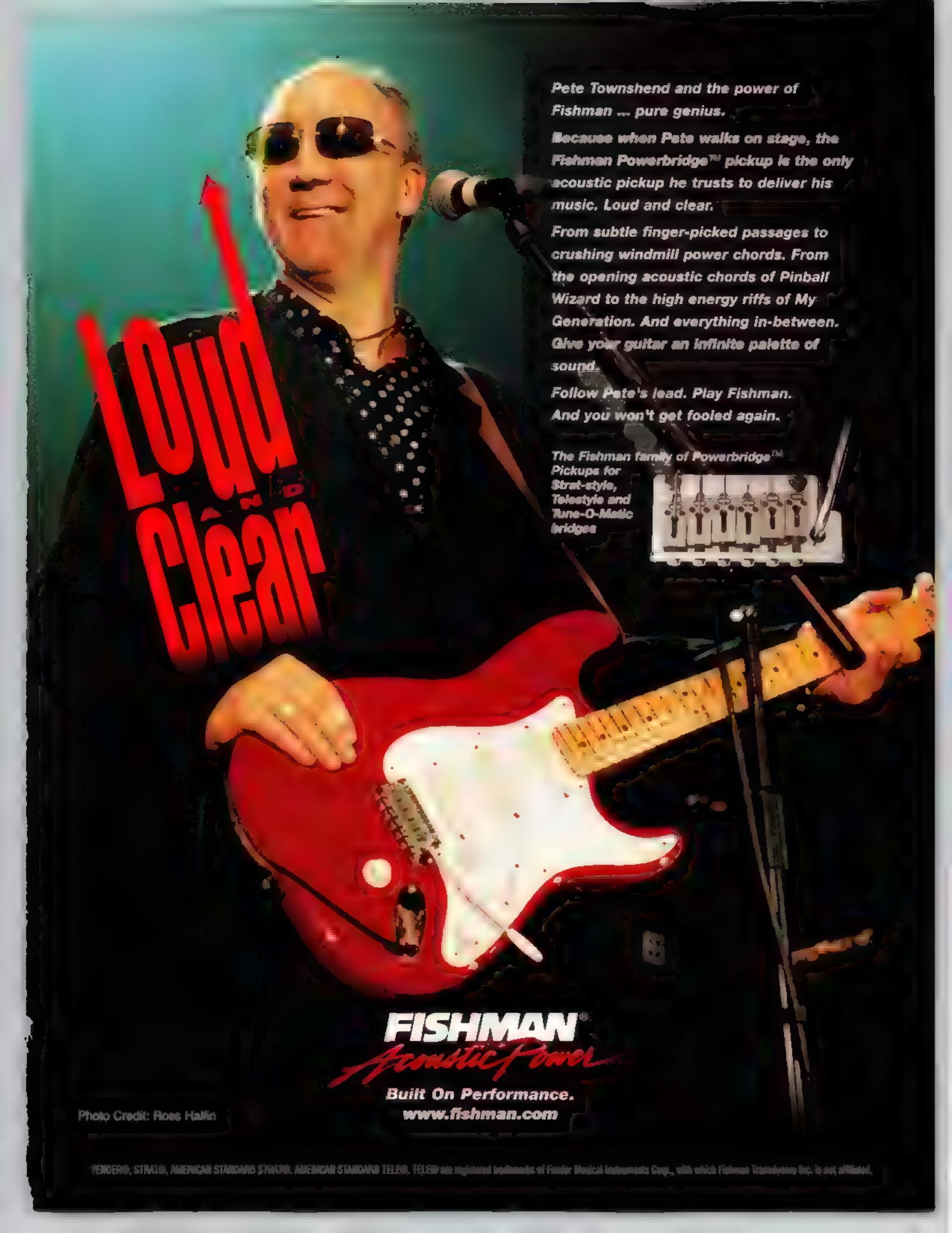
Definitely. While I don't use many open tunings, I do try to make available the open strings I have. There's a nice chime to open strings that you just won't get anywhere else on the guitar. I'm really into that sound—probably from listening to the first Stone Roses album—where everything just jangles and rings.

Is it difficult to recreate your soundscapes live?

No, but that's only because our songs aren't heavily layered. I rarely track more than one guitar part, although sometimes Chris will put down both a piano track *and* an acoustic guitar track, or I'll double a riff, or we'll bring in a string section.

When did you discover effects?

When I bought Ride's first album, *Nowhere*, I thought their soundscapes were simply amazing, so I pestered my brother to tell me how they did it. He said, "Delay pedals." I went out and



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Lush Life

bought one, and I've never looked back.

So you're a confirmed delay junkie?

Absolutely. And, to be honest, I never got much further than that. I use a bit of distortion, wah, and reverb, but little else. And the effects I do use—particularly delay and reverb—are very necessary for creating that huge depth of sound.

What's the most important thing about using delay?

Getting it in time with the groove. It sounds like a small detail, but it's crucial. You can get lucky with older delay units, and have all the echoes line up nicely, but it's a lot easier with modern ones that let you tap in tempos.

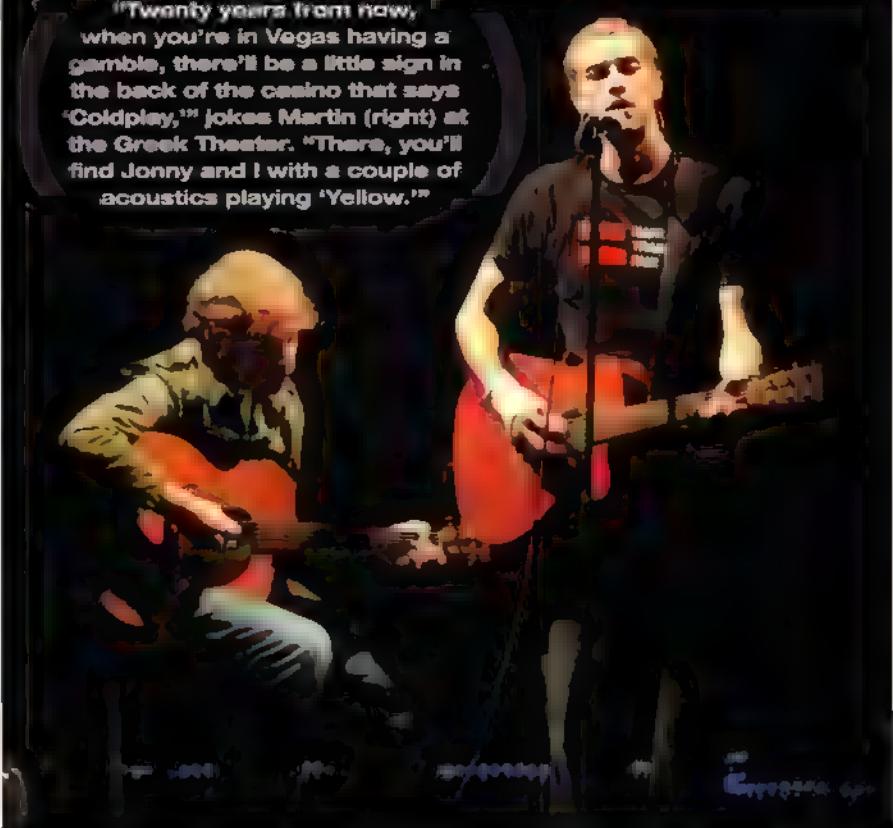
How do you control the 2290 onstage?

I don't. My tech, Matt McGinn, does. He helps me everywhere, from making sure my amps are sounding good to setting up tones in the studio. It's always good to have a few pairs of ears on this stuff, which is why our soundman, Dan Green, helps out, as well. He was the one who suggested I switch to Fender Hot Rod DeVilles.

What were you using before?

Fender Twins. But they were like 30 years old, which meant they were a bit unreliable. Also, when you're playing a gig in a remote place like, say, Iceland, and you have to rent a couple

"Twenty years from now, when you're in Vegas having a gamble, there'll be a little sign in the back of the casino that says 'Coldplay,'" jokes Martin (right) at the Greek Theater. "There, you'll find Jonny and I with a couple of acoustic guitars playing 'Yellow.'"



DC-30 The DC-30 delivers 30 watts from four EL84 output tubes and features dual channels, each with its own effects loop. Channel 1's Top Boost circuit has volume, bass, and treble controls. Channel 2, a high-gain circuit based on an EF88 pentode, sports a 6-position rotary tone switch. The DC-30's circuitry is wired point-to-point on terminal strips (no circuit boards) and the transformers are hand wound. Many of the internal components are military spec, and the open-back cabinet is constructed of 11-ply birch. Other features of this great sounding combo include modified Celestion speakers (a G12H and a G12M), a master-volume bypass switch, a global Cut control (for selective softening of high frequencies), a high/low power switch, and a Speaker Phase switch that allows the DC-30 to maintain correct speaker phase with other amps or cabinets.



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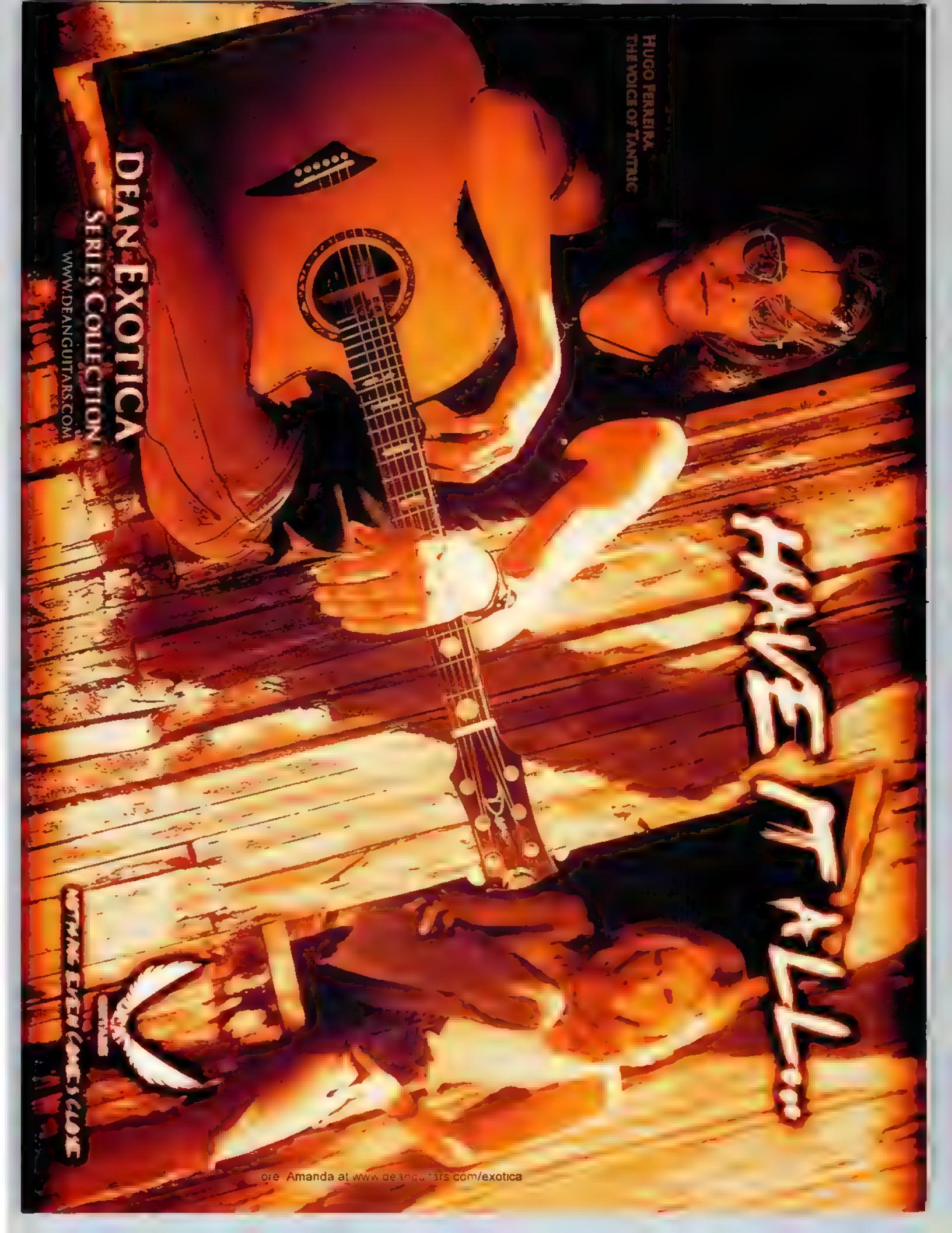
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of Twins, sometimes you end up with those horrible, mid-'80s versions with the red knobs. DeVilles, on the other hand, are pretty standard the world over. They have everything the Twins have, yet they sound a bit warmer. And when you're letting notes or chords ring out through a DeVille, you get the most amazing decay. It's hard to describe, but as the notes get quieter, they remain long and smooth. I even like the DeVille's overdrive channel—I used to rely on distortion pedals.

Do you have a favorite guitar?

At the moment, I'm using an early-'70s Fender Thinline Telecaster with humbuckers, as well as a Gibson ES-335. I don't have a million guitars—just eight or nine. But I'm amazed by all the great guitar shops I've discovered while traveling around America, so my collection is slowly growing. Some of those shops are paradise for me, because there just aren't as many great, old guitars available in Britain.

What's the biggest challenge you face onstage?

Bum notes. Our music is so sparse, that if I hit a bum note, you can *really* tell. For example, we played a show in New York, and Oasis was there. Afterwards, Noel Gallagher said to me, "I saw you play in Scotland, and you didn't do anything wrong. So when I heard you hit a wrong note tonight, I nearly pissed my pants laughing!"

Did you play any bum notes at those infamous stadium dates on the Parachutes tour?

To be honest, I wasn't worried about my playing, I was worried about the flying bottles of piss. We were opening for Blink 182 and some other bands, and being that we were the only act with songs under 100 bpm, it was a challenge to win over the crowd. They'd all come to drink, body surf, and hit each other. Our record company assured us that the flying objects were a sign that the crowd liked us, but I'm not sure I entirely believe that. A guy in a band before us got his nose broken by a cell phone that hit him in the face. But we got through it, and despite the projectiles, we felt that if we won over just one person in those stadiums, we did well.

What do you learn from an experience like that?

To enjoy our own gigs! We had a new appreciation for the people that like us and come out to see us play. Those stadium shows came at the end of a struggling period for Coldplay. Before that, Chris had lost his voice and we were very low on confidence. We didn't know why anyone would come see us, and we thought that those who did probably hated us. We were quite suspicious of everything.

Why the inferiority complex?

We're kind of a mixture of extreme paranoia and extreme arrogance. On the one hand, we wouldn't get up onstage and play if we didn't think we were the best thing since sliced bread. But, on the other hand, we think that everyone else is better than us, and that we've got a lot of work to do. We've still got so much to prove. ■

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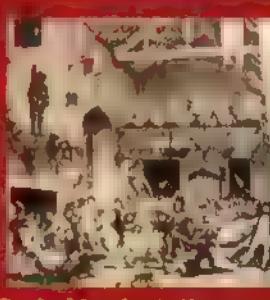
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"I HATE TO SAY IT," ASSERTS BILL FRISELL, "but music's greatest innovators weren't guitar players."

Yes, die-hard guitar loyalists, you heard right. But before you take exception to Frisell's bold words, remember that Frisell has more than enough credibility to make such a statement. Not only has he dedicated almost 40 years to the guitar, he has achieved the ultimate goal of any musician—a sound. His distinctive playing ranks right up there with B.B. King, Alan Holdsworth, Carlos Santana, Pat Metheny, and a few select others. And though you'll often find Frisell in your record store's

jazz bins, his albums transcend genres.

"Think about it," says Frisell. "Miles Davis often didn't even have a guitar in his groups, but the way they functioned was revolutionary. The way the drums, bass, and piano all reacted with each other—that's what I get excited about."

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►By Jude Gold





THE BIG BANG

Before we get started, however, don't let Frisell's love for horn players, pianists, and jazz arrangers mislead you—he *has* been profoundly influenced by guitar players, as well. Proving his point, Frisell starts off this Master Class by passing along an approach he learned from jazz great Jim Hall three decades ago.

THE JIM HALL LESSON

"What Jim showed me is an idea that's very simple, yet you could spend your whole life trying to get through just one millionth of the possibilities," says Frisell, who took eight memorable lessons from Hall in 1971. "It basically has to do with taking, say, a C major scale and harmonizing it with one, two, or three other notes. But instead of thinking of the scale as going across the neck like this [plays Ex. 1]—which is how most guitarists are taught to practice it—the idea is to see the scale going *up* and *down* the neck on just one string. It's as if you're looking at a piano with all the white

keys laid out in front of you. Here are three ways of doing it [plays Ex. 2]. I'm just playing notes from the C major scale with one finger, one string at a time."

MELODIC MOTION

"Once you get this way of playing the scale burned into your brain, try to play some melodies in the same manner," suggests Frisell. "To show you what I mean, I'll improvise freely in C on just the first string [plays Ex. 3]. It's sort of an awkward way of playing—and it *does* go against a lot of instruction books that teach you to play in single positions—but it gets you to break out of patterns. In a way, you're playing like sitar players do. They play unbelievably complex melodies on just one string."

PARALLEL MOTION

"The next step is harmonizing these single-string scales," offers Frisell. "Start with triads [plays Ex. 4]. I'm still just going up the C major scale, but this time on three strings at the same time, creating three-part harmony. It's a very useful sound and it's a lot like what a piano play-

er might do when vamping in C."

"What Jim had me do next was break out of this triad thing and get more into *intervals*. For example, here is the scale being played on the first three strings again, but this time each shape is composed of stacked fourths, using notes from the C major scale [plays Ex. 5]. This creates an interesting sound, and we haven't even left the scale—that is, each of these three-note chords is *diatonic* to the key of C major. I often use this approach in my musical arrangements. Experiment with this technique; see if you can use it on other sets of strings or as a means of harmonizing a melody—like this [plays Ex. 6]."

EVANS AND EVANS

"I really love Gil Evans," says Frisell. "He arranged music for Miles Davis, and he often featured seconds in his harmonies. To demonstrate, here's an ascending melody in the key of C that has either a major or minor second between the lowest two notes of every grip [plays Ex. 7]. I love that sound. It's also reminiscent of what Bill Evans did on the piano."

The unique thing about Frisell's vibrato—

Ex. 1

C major scale



Ex. 2

Single-string C major scales

Musical notation for Ex. 2. It shows three single-string C major scales. The first scale is on the 6th string, starting at the 12th fret and going down to the 1st fret. The second scale is on the 5th string, starting at the 11th fret and going down to the 1st fret. The third scale is on the 4th string, starting at the 10th fret and going down to the 1st fret. The notation includes a treble clef, a key signature of C major, and a common time signature. Fingerings are indicated above the notes: 2, 2, 2 for the 6th string; 2, 2, 2 for the 5th string; and 1, 2, 3 for the 4th string. The notation is divided into measures by vertical bar lines.

Ex. 3

Freely

Musical notation for Ex. 3. It shows a single-string C major scale on the 6th string, starting at the 12th fret and going down to the 1st fret. The notation includes a treble clef, a key signature of C major, and a common time signature. Fingerings are indicated above the notes: 2, 2, 2 for the 6th string. The notation is divided into measures by vertical bar lines. The 6th string has notes at the 12th, 11th, and 10th frets. The 5th string has notes at the 9th, 8th, and 7th frets. The 4th string has notes at the 5th, 4th, and 3rd frets.

Ex. 4

Freely

Musical notation for Ex. 4. It shows three-note chords on the 6th, 5th, and 4th strings. The first chord is on the 6th string at the 12th fret, the 5th string at the 11th fret, and the 4th string at the 10th fret. The second chord is on the 6th string at the 11th fret, the 5th string at the 10th fret, and the 4th string at the 9th fret. The third chord is on the 6th string at the 10th fret, the 5th string at the 9th fret, and the 4th string at the 8th fret. The notation includes a treble clef, a key signature of C major, and a common time signature. Fingerings are indicated above the notes: 1, 2, 3 for the 6th string; 2, 3, 4 for the 5th string; and 1, 2, 3 for the 4th string. The notation is divided into measures by vertical bar lines.

which he introduces at the end of Ex. 7 and employs in many of the ensuing examples—is that it's capable of both raising and *lowering* single notes, entire chords, or even open strings in pitch. But when you're face to face with the guitarist, it's hard to tell how he's generating this warbly, underwater sound—especially on a Tele-style guitar with no tremolo system. "Though it may not look like it, I'm wiggling the neck around a lot," explains Frisell. "I sort of lean into it and push on it. It's become an unconscious thing."

PUNCHY PAIRS

"Jim Hall also taught me that you don't always *have* to play gigantic, stretched-out chords to have a huge impact," says Frisell, illustrating his point with the rising diads in Ex. 8. "Sometimes just a couple of notes can have a real meaty sound if the intervals are spread out over several strings, like these major and minor ninths. I'm starting with *F* on the first string and *E* on the fourth string, and I'm just climbing up the C major scale on both strings. We haven't left our major key, but we're generating a lot of dissonance with just a few notes."

Ex. 7

Freely

C



Freely

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 10 12 13

T 0 2 4 5 7 9 10 12 13

A

B

Ex. 7

Ethereal

C



Ethereal

1 2 3 5 7 8 10 12 13

T 5 7 9 10 12 14 16

A

B

Ex. 8

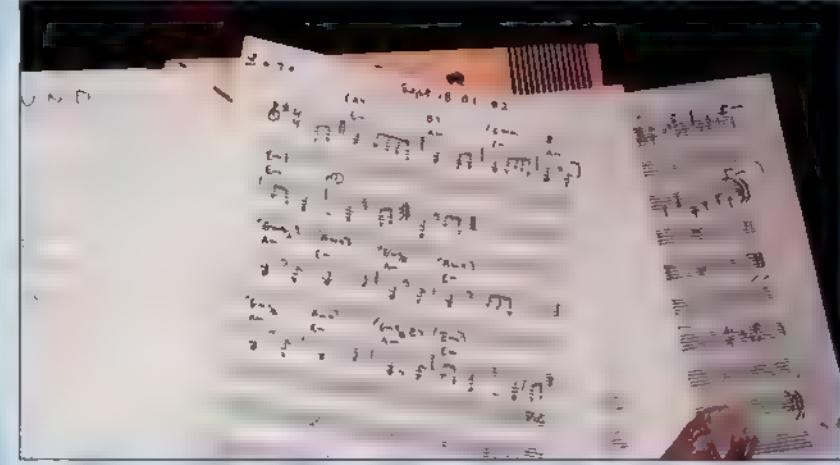
CHEAT SHEETS

"It's a bit embarrassing, actually," confesses Frisell of the crowded music stand that accompanied him at a recent string of concerts at Yoshi's in Oakland, California. "The rest of the band already knows their parts, but I'm still reading the music—and I wrote the songs!"

—JC

Dreamily

Cmaj7



Dreamily

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 10 12 13

T 0 2 4 5 7 9 10 12 13

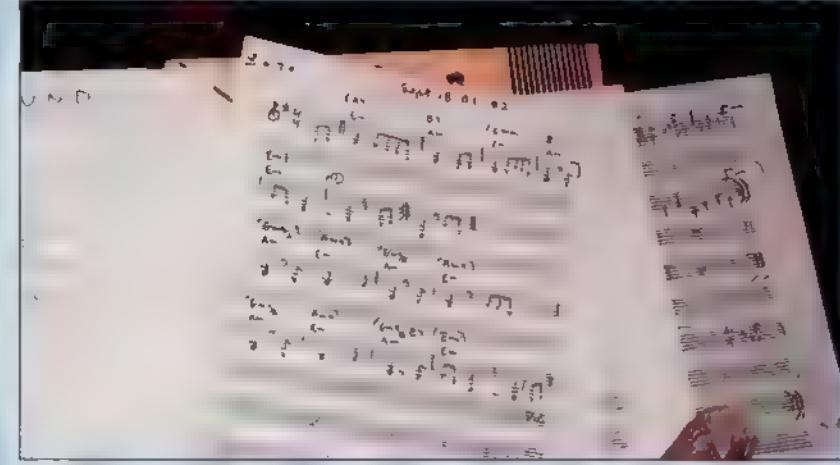
A

B

Ex. 6

Dreamily

Cmaj7



Dreamily

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 10 12 13

T 0 2 4 5 7 9 10 12 13

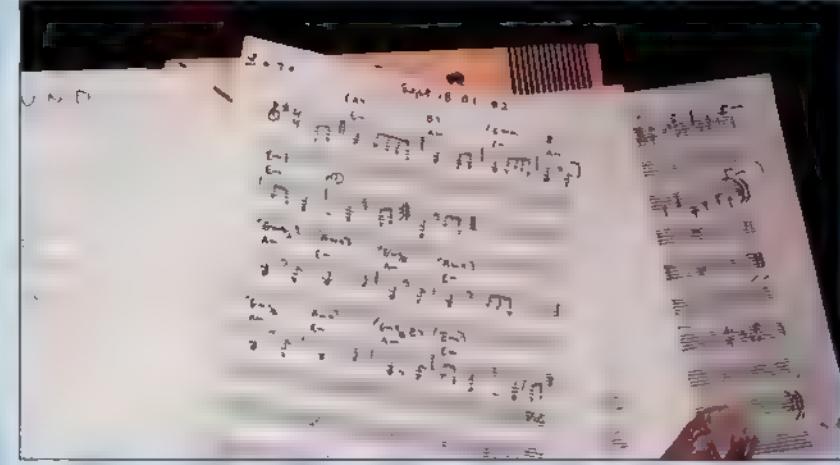
A

B

Abrasive

Fmaj7

Cmaj7



Abrasive

1 3 5 7 8

T 1 3 5 7 9

A

B

THE BIG BANG

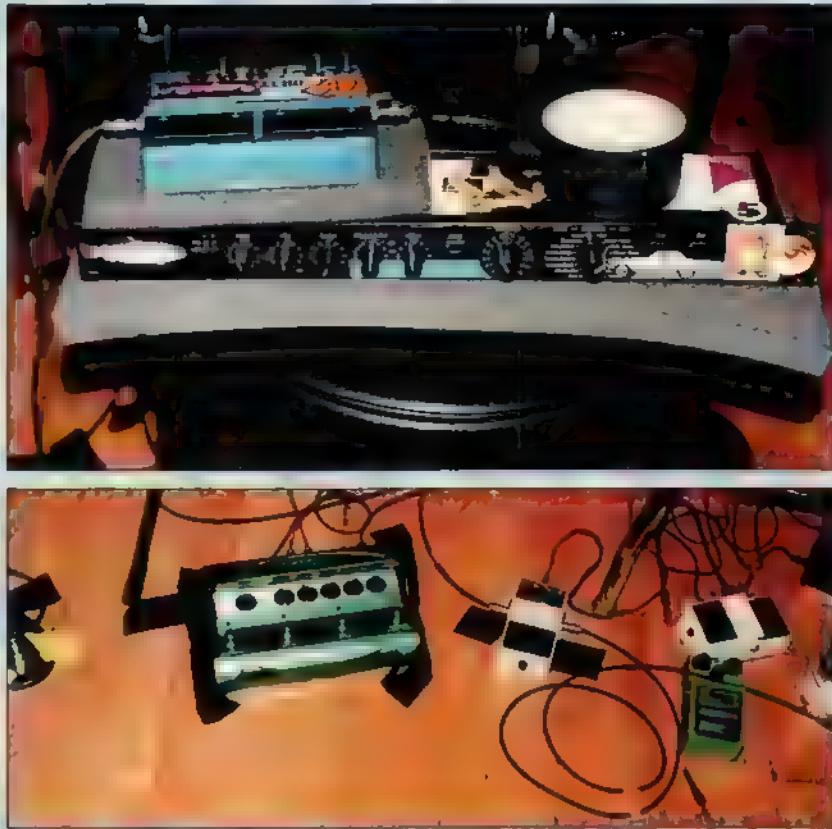
EXPANSION POTENTIAL

"I could spend the rest of my life struggling to learn all this stuff," admits Frisell of Hall's approach. "And here, we've barely covered C major. It really gets insane when you start thinking of the possibilities offered by all the different keys, not to mention all the other scales. But while the thought of that can be overwhelming, what I like most about this stuff is that you can apply it to any kind of music, whether you play jazz, rock, or bluegrass."

Proving that Hall-inspired moves also work in blues settings, Frisell plays a series of spicy grips over G7, the V chord in C [Ex. 9]. "The scale gets a lot more complicated in a blues, where you may include a b3 or a b5," he observes. "What I'm playing here is sort of cheating, because some of the notes are way outside the key. But you can get away with it because the bluesy melody—which takes place in the upper voice on the first string—is so strong. Plus, this phrase is easy. I'm just moving the same shape up and down the neck. It may sound a bit wild by itself, but if a whole band is banging away on a G7 chord, it sounds fine, and is not unlike what entire saxophone sections might play in big bands. It's a sound that you don't often hear from the guitar."

CASCADE TACTICS

When playing melodies, Frisell often plucks notes on different strings and lets them ring against each other. These overlapping tones create stabs of harmony that enrich a melodic phrase. "I like to work out fingerings for scales or melodies that get things running like a piano," he says. "For example, I'll take a G major scale and refinger it using open strings



FRISELL'S COCKPIT

Frisell's gear, like many of his songs, is casually arranged, allowing plenty of room for sonic mixing and matching. A Line 6 DL4 Delay Modeler—which Frisell uses mostly as a looper—is taped to the stage, along with a Boss DD-3 Delay. These pedals are routed through a DigiTech PDS 8000 Echo Plus and a Lexicon MPX 100 multi-effects processor, which are both placed within arm's reach on a stool. The MPX 100 sends a stereo signal to a pair of tube amps (often Fender Deluxe Reverb reissues), and noisy ground problems are minimized with an EB Tech Hum Eliminator. Frisell's cables are all George L.

—IG



Ex. 9

Dissonant blues

G13

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[plays Ex. 10]. I let everything ring as long as it possibly can by holding every note until the last moment. Curve your fingers so they don't dampen the open strings.

"You can also play these same notes over *Em*. Or, raise each *C* to *C*#, and you'll get the *A* Mixolydian scale, which works over *A7*. To make things even bluesier in the key of *A*, include *C*, which is the *b3*, as well as *E*flat, the *b5*."

Frisell demonstrates these tangy sounds over a 12/8 groove in Ex. 11. For full effect, keep those pitches ringing with chimey overlap, and notice that the last pitch is a harmonic sounded on the *D* string at the 7th fret.

HARMONICS

Listening to Frisell, you realize that nothing adds sparkle to a riff, melody, or phrase like the inclusion of harmonics. To illustrate how these partials can be incorporated in a lick, Frisell plays Ex. 12. "I'm mixing open strings with harmonics sounded at the 12th fret," he details. "The result is a rising *E* minor pentatonic scale, and when you

Ex. 10

G major/E minor cascade

Ex. 11

Clangy blues

A7

Ex. 12

Freely

Em11

JAGCASTER!

Frisell's newest tool of expression is a colorful, one-of-a-kind Tele-style guitar built for him by Seattle tech Mike Lull.

"The neck is from my beat-up '64 Fender Jaguar," reveals Frisell. "It has a shorter scale than

a Tele neck, so the bridge had to be installed closer to the center of the body. The custom paintjob is by Claude Utley, who did the artwork for my 2000 album, *Ghost Town*. He painted the entire back of the body, including the backplate! It's strung with D'Addarios, the pickups are Seymour Duncan Antiquities—a humbucker and a Telecaster Neck—and instead of a 3-way selector switch, the guitar has a 3-position knob."

—IG



hit the final note, all six strings should be ringing."

Frisell also digs the sweet-and-sour clang created by fretted notes that are placed in close pitch proximity to ringing harmonics. "I

like finding dissonant sounds that way," he says, demonstrating with Ex. 13. "I'm not even thinking in a particular key."

Frisell produces another striking effect by

Ex. 13

Otherworldly



Brian Moore Custom Shop
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THE BIG BANG

plucking fretted notes and harmonics simultaneously in Ex. 14. "I'm starting with a *B* harmonic on the sixth string that's played against a fretted *C* on the fourth string, creating a dissonant minor second," he says. "With each pairing of a note with a harmonic, I'm picking the lower string while plucking the higher one with my middle finger [see Fig. 1]."

Six note chords can include harmonics as well, as Frisell proves with Ex. 15. Looking at Fig. 2, it may appear that all six strings are being barred at the 7th fret. They're not. While Frisell is indeed touching all the strings with his 1st finger, he's only pressing hard enough to sound the harmonics. It's his 2nd and 4th fingers that are actually fretting notes.

Ex. 14

Freely

Ex. 15

Cmaj9/B

◆ = harmonic

Ex. 16

♩ = 54 Em7

FINAL ODYSSEY

The best way to learn how to integrate these various approaches into your playing is, of course, to sit down with Frisell and watch him seamlessly blend these colors in a spontaneous improvisation. While *GP* can't teleport you to a one-on-one jam with Frisell, we can come pretty close with Ex. 16, which shows you how the guitarist effortlessly merges several of the concepts tackled in this lesson

Accompanied by an *Em7* chord, he starts off with a jangly phrase laced with open strings in bar 1, follows with an arpeggiated cluster in bar 2, delivers a shrill mix of harmonics and fretted notes in bar 3, and closes with an ascending cascade composed entirely of harmonics.

"That's what I love about the guitar," observes Frisell. "It can get so many sounds and really mimic other instruments. I think of it as a miniature orchestra." ■



Fig. 1



Fig. 2

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QUEST GURU

Bruce Cockburn's Magic Tuning

BY JUDE GOLD



"WHEN I FIRST STARTED performing," recalls Bruce Cockburn, "it was the '60s, and the scene was different from today. There was more of a coffeehouse atmosphere, which involved people not drinking alcohol, but actually *listening* to the music. Audiences today are faced with less introspection and more volume from performers."

These days, Cockburn, too, runs his acoustic through a PA system and a few tasteful effects. He is also backed by a full band, as he was when he cracked the radio code nearly two decades ago with "If I Had a Rocket Launcher" and "Wondering Where the Lions Are"—both of which appear on the new Cockburn compilation *Anything Anytime Anywhere [Rounder]*. But if you've ever seen the Canadian icon cut loose on an acoustic guitar, you know that all he needs is a lone steel-string to leave audiences utterly transfixed. Many of Cockburn's colorful, hyp-



Measuring melodies on a Manzer—Cockburn demonstrates the opening phrase of "Down to the Delta."

notic passages don't require the insane chops of a Chet Atkins or Adrian Legg. Often, the secret lies in finding an enchanted tuning where

riffs and melodies sound spectacular, yet are just plain *easy* to play.

"For me, the advantage of putting a guitar in open tuning is

that you get lots of ringing open strings," explains Cockburn. "It allows notes and intervals to chime against each other in unique ways."

Ex. 1

♩ = 160 Dm11

You can try open tunings on electric too, though to keep the right tension on detuned strings you may have to increase their gauges. But there's nothing like the attack you get from an acoustic guitar."

Few songs illustrate this point more vividly than Cockburn's spell-binding instrumental, "Down to the Delta," from his 20th studio album, *Breakfast in New Orleans Dinner in Timbuktu*. The trick to unlocking the song's transcendent themes lies in Cockburn's tuning, which is D, A, C, G, C, F (low to high). Simply drop your sixth and fourth strings a whole-step, raise

your first and second strings a half-step, and you're there.

"The first phrase involves moving a partial barre around the neck while droneing on the open low string," explains Cockburn, demonstrating with Ex. 1. "I start with my 4th finger at the 7th fret. It bares the fourth, third, and second strings, which I pluck with my index, middle, and ring fingers, respectively. My thumb plucks the open-D quarter notes in the lower voice."

To play the second phrase in Ex. 1, simply shift the three-note barre up a string. When you've got it dialed, move on to the exhilarating, im-

press-your-friends moves in Ex. 2.

"Here, the tune switches to a 3/4 feel," details Cockburn. "There are a lot of notes, but they're simple to play. I'm just successively hammering from the 12th to the 14th frets on the second, third, and fourth strings—I follow each hammer with a plucked, open high string—and then returning in the same fashion. In the second part of the phrase, the hammers take place between the 9th and 12th frets. Once you get these moves down, add that low-D drone again. To close this section, I like to play a downward, cascading D minor

run [plays Ex. 3]."

The piece *does* step out of D minor, when, for two bars each, Cockburn plays Dm9,11, Bm7,13, Dm9,11, and Em11. You'll find the fingerings in Ex. 4.

"My fingerstyle playing is based on either Big Bill Broonzy or Mississippi John Hurt," reveals Cockburn, who also incorporates elements of jazz and Indian music into his playing. "I think the best learning comes from trying to master someone else's style and not quite getting it, yet in the process discovering something that's your own."

Ex. 2

$\text{♩} = 160$ Dm11

Ex. 3

$\text{♩} = 160$

Ex. 4

Dm9,11 Bm7,13 Em11

Jamming with Hendrix

BY STEFAN GROSSMAN



MY FRIEND

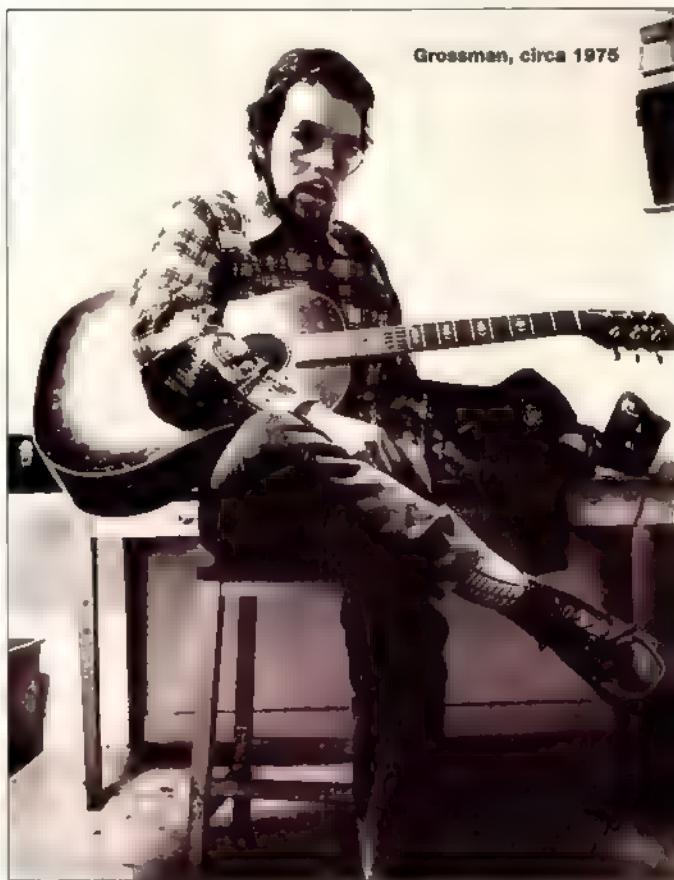
The logo for the 35th anniversary of Guitar Player magazine. It features the word "Guitar Player" in a stylized, blocky font at the top, with "35" in large, bold, serif numbers in the center, and "ANNIVERSARY" in a smaller, bold, sans-serif font at the bottom. The entire logo is set against a dark background.

One day, as Marc passed by the Café Wha? in Greenwich Village, a sound drew him inside. Downstairs, a band was playing led by a black guitarist named Jimmy James (Hendrix's first stage name). His band was the Blue Flames—four white kids with varying degrees of musical talent. Their guitar player was interesting in his own right, but nothing in comparison to this James character, who played well and could also perform many R&B guitar tricks, like playing the guitar behind his neck or with his teeth. They were supposedly doing old Chicago blues combined with some straight rock and roll, so I

wanted to hear them. By the time we got down to the Café Wha?, we were told that Jimmy and the Blue Flames were backing up John Hammond, Jr at the nearby Café Au Go Go. It was there that I got my first glimpse of Hendrix. He was playing lead, while Hammond sang and played harmonica. The backup band was adequate, but the combination of Hendrix and Hammond was really exciting.

Hammond didn't even bother to play guitar—rather, he structured his sets around Hendrix. In each set, Hendrix took solos, and the audience was treated to plenty of guitar gymnastics and great playing. Backstage, Hammond, Hendrix, and Randy California (the other guitarist in the Blue Flames) would sometimes jam with acoustic guitars. I was amazed to hear how Hendrix could control the sound of an acoustic, and then go onstage and be in complete control of his Fender Strat.

During the two weeks that Hammond and Hendrix performed at the Au Go Go, I regularly



"MISSISSIPPI BLUES"

The image shows a musical score and tablature for a guitar solo. The score is in 12/8 time, A major (A7 chord), and treble clef. The tablature is in standard six-string guitar notation. The solo consists of a series of eighth and sixteenth note patterns, primarily using the A major scale (A, B, C#, D, E, F#, G#) and its harmonic relatives. The tablature below shows the fingerings for the first six measures of the solo.

Measure 1: 4 5 6 (upstroke), 7 8 6 5 5 6 7 (downstroke)

Measure 2: 6 7 5 5 6 7 (upstroke), 4 5 6 (downstroke)

Measure 3: 7 8 6 5 5 6 7 (upstroke), 0 0 0 (downstroke)

Measure 4: 0 0 0 (upstroke), 0 0 0 (downstroke)

Measure 5: 0 0 0 (upstroke), 0 0 0 (downstroke)

Measure 6: 0 0 0 (upstroke), 0 0 0 (downstroke)

caught their set. Hendrix played straight blues, never using distortion. His lead playing combined R&B sounds with B.B. King-style lines and a John Lee Hooker rhythmic approach. His singing had a touch of Hooker and Muddy Waters, though I had the impression that Hendrix's biggest vocal influence at the time was Hammond.

I jammed with Hendrix several times, either at the Au Go Go or at the Fretted Instrument shop. One

of the easiest ways for us to get into each other's playing was for me to lay down a basic fingerpicked instrumental that gave Hendrix room enough to explore his melodic lead lines. "Mississippi Blues," by Willie Brown, was an ideal choice for this type of musical interaction. The tune comes from a Library of Congress recording, *Negro Blues and Hollers*, and it clearly shows a Delta guitarist trying to imitate the popular piano

blues of the times.

This arrangement has become well known. I taught it to Eric Clapton, and we spent many hours jamming on it. David Bromberg recorded a version of it, Roy Bookbinder played it on *Travelin' Man*, and Rory Block performed it on *How To Play Blues Guitar*. I recorded a duet version with a second guitar playing single-string lead lines on my album, *Acoustic Music for the Body and Soul*. While this

arrangement is somewhat complex, it's not hard to learn if you build it up step by step. Once you've mastered it, jam on it with other players. You'll likely find that it's a gateway to different blues sounds, techniques, and styles.

Stefan Grossman heads Stefan Grossman's Guitar Workshop, which you can visit online at guitarvideos.com. This column originally ran in the Sept. '75 GP. ■

The image displays three staves of musical notation for guitar, arranged vertically. Each staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The first staff starts with a D7 chord, indicated by a Roman numeral above the staff. The second staff starts with an A7 chord, also indicated by a Roman numeral. The third staff starts with an E7 chord. Below each staff is a corresponding TAB (Tablature) staff, which shows the fingerings and string patterns for the chords. The TAB staffs use the standard guitar tab system with six horizontal lines representing the strings and vertical tick marks representing fingers (1 through 4).

SONIC SNAPSHOT

Steve Vai's Head-Cuttin' Riffs

BY JUDE GOLD



WHO CAN FORGET
the hissing guitar demon Steve Vai portrayed in the 1986 film *Crossroads*?

His character was so intimidating because Vai—with his piercing stare and utterly lethal fretboard prowess—was pretty much playing himself. And although it's the film's good guy (Eugene, played by a young, Tele-wielding Ralph Macchio) who nails the dazzling classical riffs during the movie's climactic "Head-Cuttin' Duel" scene,

it is Vai, the studio musician, who played both parts. Much of the inspiration for those show-stopping moves came from 24 caprices written in 1820 by another formidable string virtuoso—violinist Niccolò Paganini (who also played and composed for guitar).

If you saw *Crossroads*, or have heard "Eugene's Trick Bag," from the newly released collection of Vai's film music, *The Elusive Light and Sound, Vol. 1* (Favored Nations), you'll instantly recognize



Hot lick—Vai plucks the fifth string with his tongue.

the dazzling sixteenth-note passage in Ex. 1. It's taken directly

from Paganini's "Caprice No. 5 in A Minor," and is the launching pad for some of the show-stopping neo-classical runs Vai recorded for Macchio's character.

Take your time to working this phrase up to speed, and try monitoring your progress with a metronome. Then, do exactly what Vai did: Hunt down other amazing classical melodies that translate beautifully to electric guitar. From show-off trumpet themes to lyrical cello suites, contrapuntal piano bournées to angular 12-tone rows, there are centuries worth of public-domain classical scores waiting for you to discover them on the World Wide Web or at your local music store.



Ex. 1

♩ = 100-144

8th

16th

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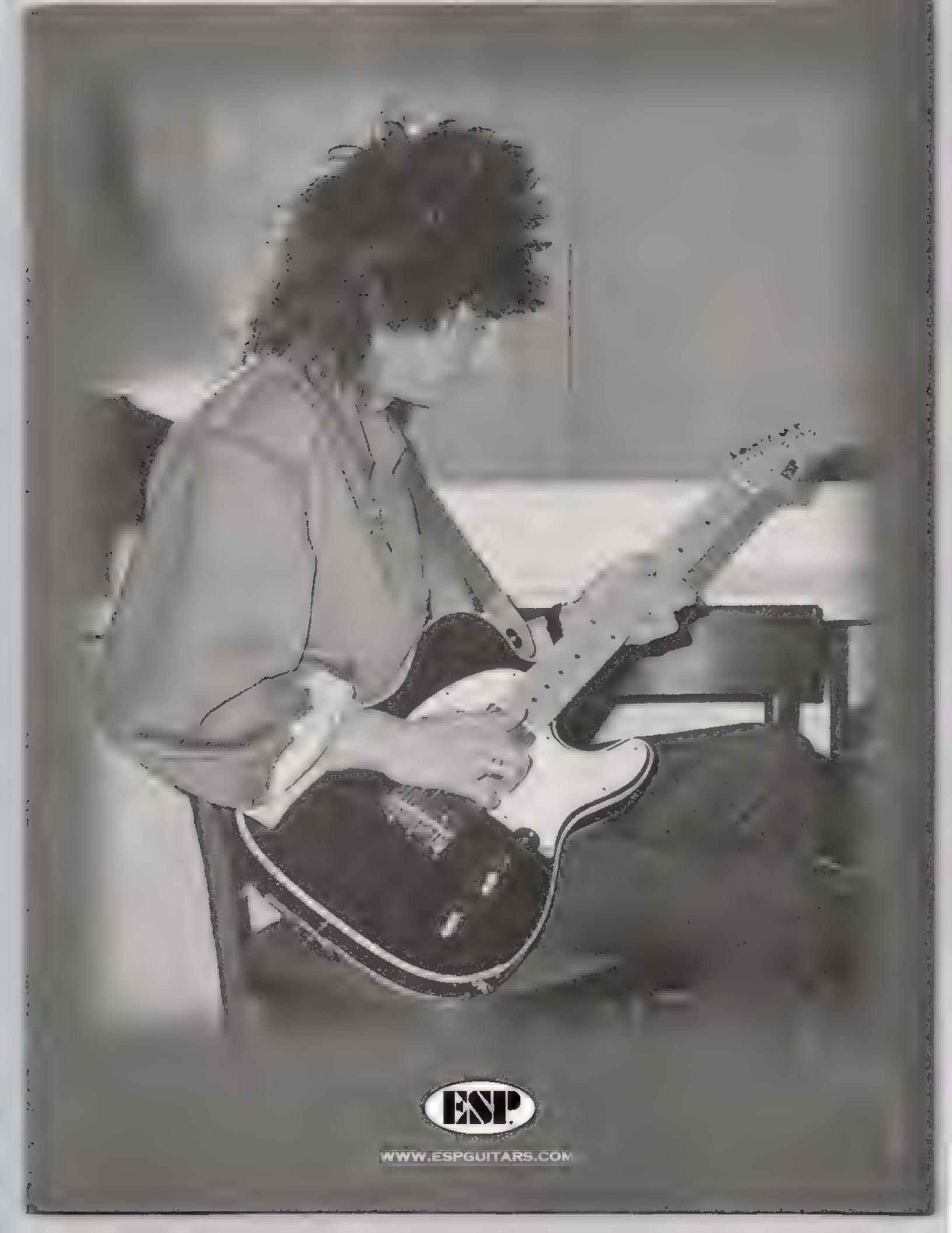
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- Front Panel mix control (Parallel Efx loop)
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AUDIO



Various Artists

20 Years of Dischord

Punk rock has always had its geographic starting points. In the '70s, New York and London were the movement's launching pads for the coming revolution. All over the world, however, smaller pockets of disenfranchised youths were poised to strike, and Washington, D.C. in the early '80s was one such place.

The three-CD set, *20 Years of Dischord*, is a fascinating look at the Dischord label and the acts it brought to prominence. Dischord's beginnings can be traced directly to a young group called the Teen Idles and two of its members—drummer Jeff Nelson and bassist Ian MacKaye. Their *Minor Disturbance* EP was Dischord's first release, and it was financed for a whopping \$600 from the group's gig money. But by the time that record hit the streets, the Teen Idles were history and Nelson and MacKaye started a new band, the hugely influential Minor Threat.

Over the next two decades Dischord faithfully documented



and released the Washington, D.C. area's most dangerous and creative punk rock. With engineer Don Zientara manning the mixing console at his Inner Ear Studio, bands such as Government Issue, Rites of Spring, Dag Nasty, and the label's most prominent group, MacKaye's Fugazi (in which he's a guitarist) went on to inspire another generation of musicians who weren't getting what they wanted from the major record labels.

Listening to *20 Years of Dischord* (discs one and two are previously released material, and disc three contains unreleased material and six live video clips), from a guitar perspective, you can't help but marvel at the sheer power and energy the players bring to the often chaotic pro-

ceedings. Highlights include Void's Bubba Dupree on "Dehumanized," Franz Stahl of Scream on the track "Fight/American Justice," and Ron Winters from the group Branch Manager on the track "Mr. Weekend."

GP spoke with MacKaye to get his thoughts on some of the era's guitarists, their influences, and the changes he has seen in young bands over the past 20 years.

How important was Inner Ear Studio to Dischord records?

Ninety-five percent of the Dischord stuff was recorded there. The studio went through quite a revolution over the years, though. When Don started working with us, Inner Ear was basically a homemade 4-track studio in the basement of his house. As

things developed, he began buying more equipment, and eventually went to 8-track, then 16, then, in 1990, he moved to a new studio and went to 24-track.

Don is such an amazing person. His attitude and the atmosphere that he creates in the studio greatly affects the sound and performances of the bands. I remember back in 1980, when I was in the Teen Idles, we recorded in a different studio once and we were very unhappy with the experience—primarily because of the relationship between us and the engineer. At one point, the engineer was actually showing the studio to another band who wanted to record there while we were tracking! We looked through the window into the control booth, and he's in there with the

You may not have heard of Mike Francis, but you often hear him play.

He's one of the most recorded musicians in the business. Numerous session calls make Mike one very busy guitar player. Commercial jingles, TV themes, and soundtrack work fill up his days. Live dates and album projects fill up his nights.

"I usually know what to expect going into a session, but you never are really sure. Producers ask for a 'Stevie Ray Vaughan' type solo, then in the middle of the call suddenly think, 'What if we did a 'Steve Lukather' thing instead... Oh, and I think we need a jazzy thing at the end too!'"

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band and they're pointing and *laughing* at us. That made us feel *horrible*. Conversely, Don always treated us really well and encouraged us.

Who were some of the guitarists that were influential to the D.C. scene?

Dr. Know from the Bad Brains was a huge inspiration to all of us. Nicky Garrett of the U.K. Subs was a big influence, as was Bob Andrews from Generation X. He went on to join a band called Empire, which was a *very* obscure band, but they had a record that had a huge impact on the D.C. scene. Black Flag's Greg Ginn was a big deal, and so were Brian James of the Damned and D. Boon from the Minutemen. Everybody listened to all sorts of stuff, but we could all agree on those guys.

Who were some of the guitarists that epitomized the D.C. movement?

I think Lyle Presler from Minor Threat was one of the greatest guitar players. I mean, I was in the band, but at the time I didn't even realize it. You have to remember, when I was in Minor Threat, my back was to those guys. When I look at old footage, his playing blows me away. He was 19 years old, and he's playing so fast, and getting a very solid, pure tone. It's mind-boggling that he could fit as many chords as he did in the small space he had, but he did and it wasn't blurry—you could hear everything perfectly. I think he's one of the most under-appreciated players to come out of the era. Also, the Void stuff was phenomenal. Bubba Dupree was an amazing player—completely chaotic and nuts. Probably one of the most influential guitarists to come out of that scene.

You produced many of the bands on Dischord since the very beginning. In your opinion, how have the musicians changed over the years?

In the early '80s, everyone was just happy and enthusiastic that they were able to document their music. In the '90s, however—when the major labels swept into our zone—it became a lot less fun to record young bands. I think a lot of them were conflicted or unclear about their ambitions. The conversations switched from music to contracts. It was a drag. Everyone was trying to behave much more professionally—which, a lot of times, also means a lot less musically in my opinion.

Recently however, I have to say I've been going in the studio with young bands and I'm having a great time. I think it has come full circle. With young bands today, there isn't the preoccupation to make it. Whereas in the '90s, a lot of bands thought, "We can be huge. We can be Nirvana." A lot of bands now are just happy to be playing music.

Why the change in thinking?

I think the reason is this: Imagine there's a golden trapeze and as it comes swinging past, you're supposed to grab it, and it will take you

to the heavens of success. Well, I think in the early days the trapeze was so out of reach that nobody even thought about it. At one point, due to the success of some bands, that trapeze seemed to be swinging lower and lower, and it appeared easier to grab. Now that trapeze has gone back toward the heavens, so bands are once again returning to the conversation of music. **Dischord.**

—DARRIN FOX

Phil deGruy

Hello Dali

When you've had your fill of jazz guitar played by serious dudes with solemn faces, it's time to loosen up with Phil deGruy's mind-altering solo instrumentals. Talk about a wacko!



For starters, he plays the "Guitarp"—a custom Novak 17-string electric that boasts seven fretting strings, ten chromatic plucking strings, and fanned frets. But what's most significant is deGruy's startling musicianship. He tackles tunes by George Gershwin, Lennon and McCartney, Willie Nelson, Aaron Neville, Antonio Carlos Jobim, and Duke Ellington on two distinct levels.

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First, there's deGruy the dedicated jazzbo—a wizard who simultaneously conjures walking bass lines, shimmering harmonic cascades, swinging melodies, sassy bends, and huge tangy arpeggios from his 17 strings. But then there's prankster deGruy—a devious child who bounces eye-watering dissonance against tinkling music-box airs, and twists bebop, blues, honky tonk, and cartoon themes into stream-of-consciousness sound

Hipster-spoof deGruy invokes the spirits of Claude Debussy, Chet Atkins, Thelonious Monk, Lenny Breau, and Frank Zappa in equal measure. It can take several listenings to get oriented in deGruy's hall of mirrors, but his beatnik-on-acid excursions are sure to put a smile on your face and challenge your notion of what constitutes solo guitar. *Otter Print*. —ANDY ELLIS



Porcupine Tree

In Absentia

Steven Wilson created Porcupine Tree in

1988 as a hoax. The "legendary" '70s progressive rock group sported a fictitious legacy, imaginary band members, a phony discography, and two cassettes of music to back it all up. When the "band" actually received commercial recognition, Wilson responded with additional albums, and eventually formed a live-performing group. In 2000, PT added elements of electronica to their sound and released *Lighbulb Sun*, which sold a staggering 250,000 copies, and made them one of the most successful independent acts in the world. *In Absentia* is their first full-fledged U.S. release.

The songs on *In Absentia* definitely reference the '70s-era progressive rock bands that originally inspired Wilson and friends. There are lushly-layered acoustic guitars accompanied by echoed volume-swell fuzz lines, sunny vocals suggestive of early Genesis and Yes, and space-rock riffage reminiscent of Pink Floyd and King Crimson. But these are blended with electronica-esque loops and complex synthetic textures, post-Metallica crunch guitar tones, and lots of present-day production touches—all of which contribute to the record's modern feel. Beyond that, Porcupine Tree play with genuine sincerity, conviction, and even authority—qualities all-too rare in the brave new world of contemporary corporate rock. *Lava/Atlantic*.

—BARRY CLEVELAND

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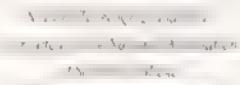
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Reviews • Print



Richard Buskin
Sheryl Crow—No Fool to This Game

While this exposé serves as an engaging biography of Sheryl Crow, you don't particularly *have* to be a fan of the platinum-selling diva to be glued to its pages. Sure, Crow faithful can look forward to learning more about Crow's family tree, hometown, college years, former bandmates, and ex-boyfriends than Crow likely knows herself. And if you like to record or produce, you'll devour the sections that reveal the creative concepts and guitar tracking approaches behind Crow's biggest songs and albums.

However, this is hardly a book about a singer. It's actually a brutal crash course in the politics of the music business. In chronicling Crow's hugely successful debut album, *Tuesday Night Music Club*, author Richard Buskin—through extensive interviews with nearly everyone involved except Crow herself—shows you just how disastrous the results can be when the visions of ambitious musicians collide, and dreams get caught in the profit-hungry gears of the record industry. Some who worked on *TNMC* got glory, others met with tragedy, but one guy who ended up somewhere in the middle was the album's gifted and level-headed producer Bill Bottrell. His insights into the art of writing and recording rock records—as well as his criticisms of the sausage-factory approaches used by major labels to market music—are the book's highlight. While his comments may inspire you to go out and record your own album, don't forget the moral of this story: If you want a friend in the music business, get a dog. *Billboard Books.* —JUDE GOLD

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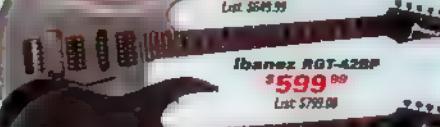
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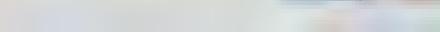
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Echoes of the Past

Danelectro Reel Echo and Spring King

By Barry Cleveland

Tape delay and spring reverb were mainstays of popular music during the '60s, and many major manufacturers produced one or both types of effects. Some of these products—such as the Fender tube Spring Reverb and the Market Electronics/Maestro Echoplex—are now considered classics, and command high prices on the vintage gear market. But these old boxes are typically bulky and fairly delicate, and often require regular tweaking to keep them operating properly—all factors that make them less than ideal for gigging guitarists.

Danelectro's Reel Echo and Spring King pedals (\$199 each) purport to provide classic delay and reverb tones, without the hassles associated with vintage boxes, and at a fraction of the cost. These pedals are very solidly constructed, can be powered by a 9V battery or the optional DA-1 AC adaptor (\$9), and sport cool paintjobs and retro knobs and switches. Sonically, they are clean and quiet, and though they don't offer true-bypass switching, I didn't notice any tone sucking or audio degradation.

Both pedals have standard mono 1/4" inputs and outputs, but the Reel Echo features a second jack that outputs just the dry signal for stereo effects.

Reel Echo

The Reel Echo was obviously modeled on the classic Echoplex tape delay—it even has a graphically-represented "tape" path, a sliding tape head-shaped knob for adjusting delay time, and a Sound On Sound switch. Despite the cosmetic resemblances, however, the Reel Echo has its own unique sound and feature set.

There's nothing new about getting a tape-delay sound out of a digital processor (In fact, one of the more successful examples is Danelectro's own Dan Echo pedal): a clean digital delay is modulated slightly to simulate tape flutter, and high frequencies are gradually filtered off successive repeats. The Reel Echo's Warble feature handles the first task, and a Lo-Fi knob lets you dial in varying amounts of high-end roll-off. To add to the fun, there's also a tone switch that toggles between tube and solid state settings, suppos-

Snapshot

Danelectro's Reel Echo and Spring King pedals (\$199 retail/\$160 street) provide bodies of antique ambience in cool, cost-effective packages.

Kissing Cousins

Line 6 DL4 Delay Modeler: \$349 retail/\$249 street (reviewed July '00)

Little Lanilei Reverb Pedal: \$199 retail/\$159 street

edly mimicking the differences in voicing between the two types of tape delays. (Note that these controls affect the *delayed* sound only.)

On the upper section of the pedal are two footswitches and associated LEDs. Pressing the Echo switch engages the effect and lights the Tempo LED, which flashes in sync with the delay time—though there's no tap-tempo function. The other footswitch puts the Reel Echo into Sound On Sound mode, which resembles the Echoplex's sound-on-sound function in name only.

SOS. The Echoplex records onto a three-minute continuous loop tape cartridge, and its Sound

On Sound switch disengages the erase head, allowing you to overdub indefinitely onto that loop. The Reel Echo's Sound On Sound switch disengages the delay input—in other words, you can record a short phrase (up to 1.5 seconds, the pedal's maximum delay time) with the repeat knob turned up enough to make the phrase play indefinitely, then press Sound On Sound and play along with that phrase without adding to it. And speaking of regeneration, you can get the Reel Echo to self-oscillate, sort of like an Echoplex (think "flying saucer"), by cranking the repeat knob all the way up. However, if you attempt to have the saucer

The Ratings Game

	Tone	Workmanship	Vibe	Value
Danelectro Reel Echo	4	4	4	4
Danelectro Spring King	3	4	3	4

The Rate-O-Meter:  3.5 stars

Excellent 

Reel Echo



- Lo-Fi control
- Sliding Speed Range knob
- Repeat knob
- Mix knob
- Tempo and S.O.S. LEDs
- Sound On Sound footswitch
- Solid State/Tube Tone switch
- Warble switch
- Echo bypass footswitch

Spring King



- Volume control
- Tone control
- Reverb control
- Kick Pad
- Bypass footswitch

Echoes of the Past

"take off" by changing the delay time, all you get is digital glitching—that's *one* classic Echoplex effect you can't get with the Reel Echo.

Head To Head. The Reel Echo works best when connected between a guitar and an amp. When patched into an amp's effects loop, there was a noticeable degradation of signal quality. (It did, however, work quite well as an outboard processor in the aux loop of my recording mixer, so go figure.) The pedal's input is flexible enough to handle pickups ranging from mellow to mega-hot, and the unit worked well when

Contact Info

Danelectro, Box 5030, San Clemente, CA 92674; (949) 498-9854; danelectro.com.

chained together with other pedals.

Does the Reel Echo sound exactly like an Echoplex? Of course not—but it does capture a great deal of the original's vibe. The Warble effect sounds more like a very nice chorus than tape flutter to me, and only the first half of the lo-fi knob's range is particularly useful. Still, I was able to get some great sounds by using them in combination with the tone switch. My favorite

setting was Warble on, lo-fi off, and tone switched to tube.

One very important characteristic that the Reel Echo *does* have in common with the Echoplex is that it is fun and inspiring to use. Add to that the Reel Echo's no-maintenance and hassle-free performance, easy portability, and bargain price, and you'll want to rush right down to your local music store without delay...delay...delay.

Spring King

The pale-yellow Spring King is an analog device containing an actual reverb tank with three eight-inch springs. Its three brown chicken-headed control knobs couldn't be simpler to use: Volume controls the input level to the reverb tank (*not* the overall volume), tone darkens or brightens the color of the reverb, and reverb determines how much effect is blended with the dry signal. The front panel also contains an oval-shaped rubber Kick Pad. This isn't connected to anything, it just provides a convenient spot to give the Spring King a good whack should you decide to add some clamorous "boings" to your performance.

After donning my baggies and waxing my board, I put the Spring King through its paces. I patched the pedal between a Les Paul and a Rivera Thirty-Twelve amp, and the first thing I noticed was that even with the King's volume control all the way down, the unit still produced a slight cinderblock room sound. Though that wasn't a particularly pleasing effect, I was quickly able to dial in more desirable sounds by increasing the volume and setting the tone and reverb controls to twelve o'clock. That brought the King to life, and soon I was surfing through a surprising variety of tonal possibilities.

The key to getting the best performance out of the Spring King is adjusting the input volume properly—too little level and it sounds tinny and wimpy, too much and it gets nasty. The other two controls are also effective over their entire ranges. The tone control provides a nice palette of coloration from dark and muffled to bright and ultra-springy, and the reverb control gradually introduces more wet signal into the mix, rather than heaping it on all at once.

The Spring King's tone can't compare to, say, a Fender tube spring reverb, or even a full-sized spring reverb in a good guitar amp. After all, there are no tubes to give it that sort of smoothness and warmth. Nonetheless, Dana's new box has *lots* of personality—and at \$199, the King rules!



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High and Mighty

Veillette Gryphon MK IV Hi-Tuned 12-String

By Joe Gore

It's funny how many electric guitarists who have stretched their range downward via 7-string and baritone guitars have been less eager to explore the soprano register. But that may change once a few players get their mitts on the gorgeous Gryphon MK IV Hi-Tuned 12-String (\$2,025). The brainchild of Woodstock luthier Joe Veillette, the Gryphon is tuned to *D* above standard *E*. Fitted with all unison strings (as opposed to the mixed unisons and octaves of regular 12-strings), this guitar overlaps with a standard mandolin's range, adding an extra fourth below the mando's low-*G* string. It's important to note, however, that any guitarist can play the Gryphon without having to learn a new tuning.

Less is More

One of the few precedents for Veillette's

- Poplar body
- Maple top
- Alnico 5 pickup/preamp system
- LaBella GR-12 strings

2" nut width

- Gotoh mini tuners
- Maple neck
- 18 1/2"-scale wenge fretboard
- 21 frets



Snapshot

The Veillette Gryphon MK IV Hi-Tuned 12-String (\$2,025 retail/street price N/A), is a more serious commodity than most high-*D* tuning rigs, providing shimmering rhythm and lead sounds that overlap into the mandolin range.

The Ratings Game

Tone

Playability

Workmanship

Hardware

Vibe

Value

Veillette Gryphon MK IV



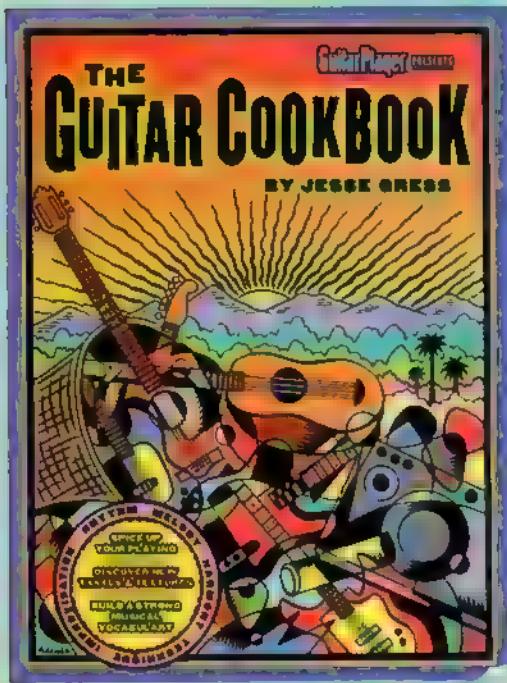
The Rate-O-Meter:



Excellent



Dig In.



Softcover, 240 pages,
ISBN 0-87930-633-5, \$24.95

The *Guitar Cookbook* spices up the practical basics with an inspirational twist: music is as good as you make it, through individual taste and personal style. Like Jesse says, "Music has one bottom line: if it sounds good to you, it is good. Developing strong musical opinions is as important as honing your chops."



Distributed to music stores by Hal Leonard Corp.; to bookstores by Publishers Group West.

Guitar Player's own music editor Jesse Gress dishes up plenty of instruction and inspiration in his latest step-by-step guide, ***The Guitar Cookbook***. Whether you're a beginning, intermediate or advanced player, this user-friendly collection of guitar music "recipes" helps you unlock the logic and art of your instrument's fingerboard.

With hundreds of musical examples and exercises, Jesse covers all the ingredients for cooking up tasty tunes: notation, tuning and intonation, rhythm, melody, scales, motifs, harmony, technique, and improvisation. Even if you play only by ear, you'll develop a personalized vocabulary and solid techniques that make new musical ideas sizzle in rock, blues, jazz, country, and more.



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Bench Tests

High and Mighty

petite, 18 1/2"-scale design is the 1960s Vox Phantom 12 (resurrected a few years back as the Vox Mini XII). But while the Vox featured magnetic pickups, the Gryphon relies on an Alvarez under-saddle piezo system—a detail that contributes to the guitar's knockout appearance. Dig how the dark wenge-wood of the 21-fret fingerboard and immaculately carved bridge frame the body's gorgeously figured maple top. Equally handsome is the asymmetrical headstock with

Contact Info

Veillette Guitars, 2628 Route 212, Woodstock, NY 12498; (845) 679-6154; veilletteguitars.com.

its 12 mini-Gotoh tuners.

The Gryphon feels great, too. The 5.5 lb ax balances beautifully, and the expertly rendered jumbo frets afford great control over the strings. But the most exciting thing about the Gryphon is its glistening treble response. I generally loathe the sound of piezo pickups, but I loved the Gryphon's tone—perhaps because the piezo quackiness is less pronounced in the

upper registers. The 3-band EQ (with sweepable midrange) is simple and effective, but you must remove the entire preamp assembly to replace the 9-volt battery.

Flying High

Crafty players will discover dozens of uses for the Gryphon. Its strings are spaced widely enough for fingerstyle playing, and the all-unison tuning makes the Gryphon more suitable for full-range, single-note work than regular 12-strings. With its huge, ultra-present sound, the Gryphon excels as a doubling instrument. Duplicating standard rhythm guitar parts offers an exciting variation on Nashville high-stringing, while doubling single-note melodies at the octave gives them piano-like authority.

But the Gryphon also has a beautiful solo voice—one that can easily mimic the mandolin, bouzouki, tres, cuatro, and other double-course instruments. In other words, the Gryphon excels as an all-purpose "ethno" ax. Bottom line: Anyone hungering for a taste of something different will find a lot to dig about the Gryphon. You definitely won't find a better legal way of getting high!

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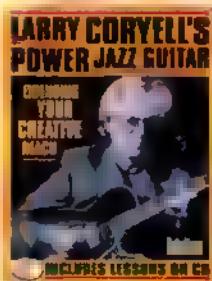


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Tone Portal

Line 6 GuitarPort

By Barry Cleveland

GuitarPort (\$229 retail) is a unique product consisting of a small USB audio interface and various types of software. Right out of the box it provides software versions of some of Line 6's popular amplifier and effects models, and a multi-faceted audio player featuring great jamming and skill-building tools. But if you subscribe to GuitarPort Online (currently \$7.99 per month), it becomes a portal to an ever-expanding array of products and services, including a library of jam-along tracks.

The hardware part of GuitarPort is a Moderne-looking red plastic box that connects to your PC's USB port (or a powered USB hub). The simple interface includes a guitar jack, a large volume dial, a status LED, 1/8" stereo inputs and outputs, stereo RCA outputs, and a USB socket. GuitarPort's 24-bit A/D/A conversion and 32-bit floating point DSP processing ensure excellent sound quality, and Flash firmware updates via USB will be periodically available.

The software user interface resembles a Web browser (and functions as one when connected to GuitarPort Online), with



- Guitar Input
- Volume dial
- Multicolored LED
- I/O panel

Snapshot

GuitarPort (\$229 retail/ \$19.99/month) combines a hardware USB interface with various types of audio and skill-building software, as well as functioning as a portal to GuitarPort Online, a subscription-based online resource featuring guitarist-oriented products and services. GuitarPort earns an Editors' Pick Award!

The Ratings Game

Sound Quality | Flexibility | Ease of Use | Value (basic unit) | Value (with GuitarPort Online)

Line 6 GuitarPort



The Rate-O-Meter:



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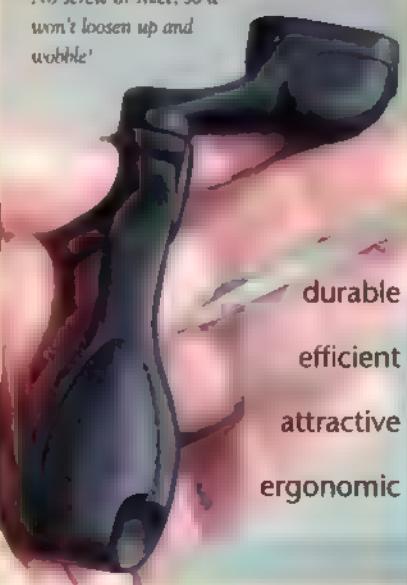
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Tone Portal

amplifier and effect information occupying the top portion of the screen. The screen can get a little crowded at times—depending on which functions are selected—but the arrangement is reasonably ergonomic and intuitive, and the most recent version allows you to collapse amp and effects windows to make room for other displays. Other important information is organized under six tabs:

GuitarPort Online. Displays links to news items, feature stories, forums, featured tones, tracks, licks, lessons, and more. This is also where you'll find graphic scale and chord generators, and where you update your online account information.

Tracks. This is where you select and load tracks, lessons, and other audio, with a choice of Online (where you download new tracks), Hard Disk (where previously downloaded tracks reside), and CD (for ripping tracks from your CDs).

Tones. Where you select and load available tones, optimize them for single coil or humbucker pickups, and manage them using your personal Tone Locker.

Artists & Gear. A database of some of the world's greatest electric guitarists that features bios, discographies (with links to online retailers), their gear and effects, and tones and jam tracks if they're available.

Tuner. A simple yet accurate tuner with detuning capabilities.

Help. Where you'll find answers to lots of questions.

Tones

The GuitarPort comes with 80 very useful preset tones, but the real fun is creating your own from the available amp and effects models. You can choose from ten amplifier models and four simultaneous effects. The amps are identical to those found in the latest version of POD, and include three Fenders ('53 Deluxe, '64 Deluxe, '59 Bassman), two Marshalls ('68 50-watt plexi, '83 100-watt JCM 800), a '67 Vox AC30 top boost, a '94 Mesa Boogie Rectifier, an '87 Roland Jazz Chorus 120, and Line 6 Insane and Classic Fuzz models. When you select an amp, a graphic representation of the actual amp's control panel appears, and each control is designed to respond in the same way that the non-virtual control would. There's also a selection of ten speaker cabs—including 1x12, 2x12, 4x10, and 4x12 configurations—that can be paired with any amp.

Effects include delay, reverb (room and spring), compression (five ratios), and modulation (chorus, flanger, rotary, and tremolo). Each effect is graphically represented as a stombox, and you adjust parameters using virtual knobs. Also included are a chromatic



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Tone Portal

GuitarPort can automatically change your tone along with this track. Choose your preferred pickup if there is an option.

Downloads: 101

Browser window showing the amp and effects interfaces, and a Tracks page for Hendrix's "The Wind Cries Mary."

System Requirements

In order to use GuitarPort you need to have a USB-enabled PC (Line 6 hopes to release a Mac version in the future) running Windows 98SE/ME/2000/XP with a Pentium II 400 MHz or better processor, an AGP video card with 800x600 graphics, a minimum of 128MB RAM, and 40MB of free hard disk space. Installation is a breeze—the installer guides you through the process step by step, analyzing your system and letting you know when some hardware requirement hasn't been met or whether additional software is needed.

tuner and an astonishingly effective intelligent hum reducer that analyzes and eliminates your guitar's specific noisiness. Besides using these models in GuitarPort's various applications, they may also be used for recording directly into any DirectSound or MME compatible recording software.

Audio Player

The GuitarPort allows you to jam along with

nearly any kind of audio—CDs, mp3s, WAV and AIFF files, etc.—and the device includes phrase-trainer technology such as looping and half-speed playback without pitch change. This feature really comes to life when you connect to GuitarPort Online. You can download hundreds of studio-quality tracks recorded by professional musicians and celebrities (such as the actual Band of Gypsys and Double Trouble rhythm sections). GuitarPort automatically

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Tone Portal

loads the appropriate guitar tones and effects patches, artist and gear information, historical and production notes, and, in many cases, even tablature. Versions of each song with and without the guitar parts are available, so once you learn the licks, you can play along with the rhythm section unaccompanied. In addition to classic songs, there are also covers of more recent tunes, a library of original compositions created just for GuitarPort Online, drum loops, bass and drum grooves, and generic style tracks.

There's More

Beyond simply playing CDs, GuitarPort's CD Tone Link feature accesses a database containing information on select discs that automatically loads in tones and song location markers. For example, I popped in a Jeff Beck CD and selected "You Know What I Mean," and a few moments later, I was jamming along using a decent approximation of Beck's tones (rhythm and lead), looking at a graph of the song structure, and reading about the song (key and tuning) and recording (label, release date, composers, producer, etc.). Awesome!

Portents of the Future

Perhaps the most exciting thing about GuitarPort is that it is an open-ended system.

How Do I Use This Thing?

GuitarPort's multi-faceted nature, while one of its strengths, can make the product difficult to grasp. Here are a few applications I found particularly useful:

- Say you enjoy learning guitar parts from CDs, but you find that having to set your amp up next to your CD player, tweak it to get an appropriate tone, and fiddle around with your CD player's "and" controls to repeat a tricky lick is a pain. With GuitarPort, you can just plug your guitar in, load a song (complete with tones and song markers), tune-up using the onboard tuner, and be playing in no time. If necessary, you can select a tricky section, loop it, and even slow it down to half-speed without changing the pitch.

- Curious about a tone on a particular track (such as Jeff Beck's "You Know What I Mean") and want to know how it was created? Load the track and the gear settings will be revealed. You can also pop in a CD, and see if GuitarPort's database can cough up the production notes for the album.

- Want to record some riffs or a song idea to your hard disk recorder without having to fire up your main guitar rig? Just plug into GuitarPort, load a tone, launch your recording software, and you'll be tracking while the idea is still fresh in mind.

- Working on a song arrangement and want to quickly try out alternative voicings and/or inversions of the chords? Simply select those chords in GuitarPort's Chord Generator, and it will graphically display the options.

—BC

Contact Info

Line 6, 29901 Agoura Road, Agoura Hills, CA 91301; (818) 575-3600; www.line6.com.

This product is already deep—I've only touched upon some of its primary features—and, according to Line 6, there's lots more coming. The company is keeping most of the cat in the bag for now, but it's a safe bet that further involvement

of pro players and partnerships with music schools will figure prominently in the picture. If you haven't already looked into this promising portal I suggest you do so—you may just see your future.



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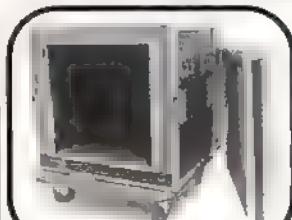
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- Find desired tones *BY EAR*—instead of searching by hand or eye
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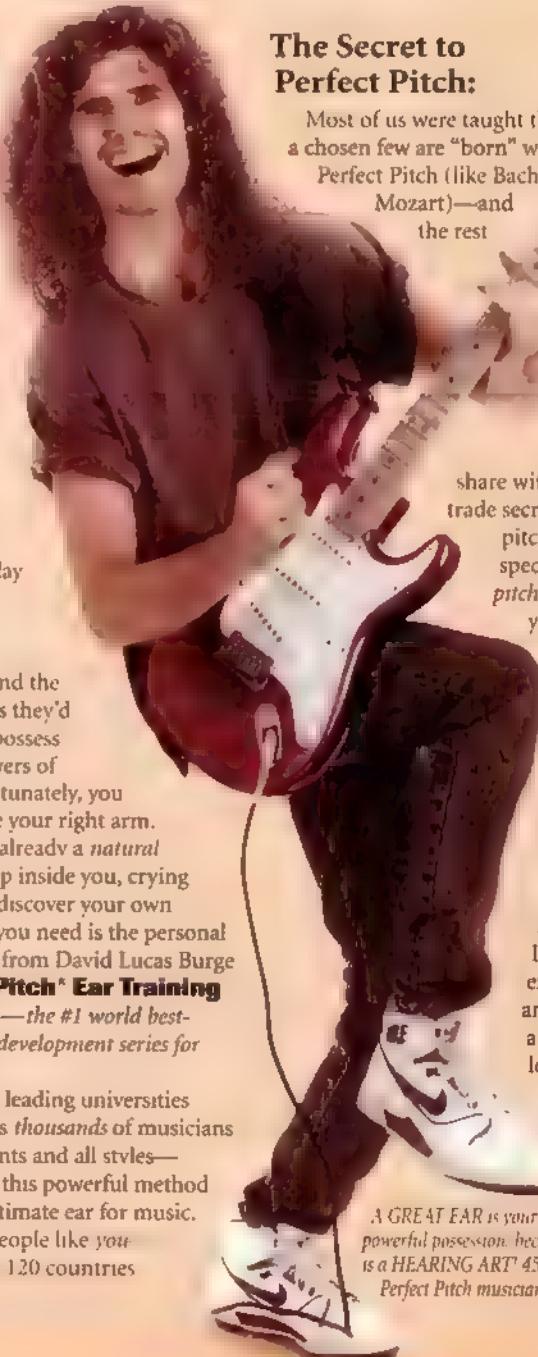
share with you his trade secrets: how each pitch has its own special sound—a *pitch color*—that

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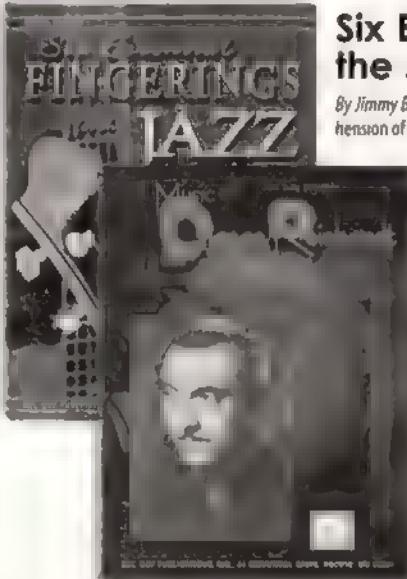
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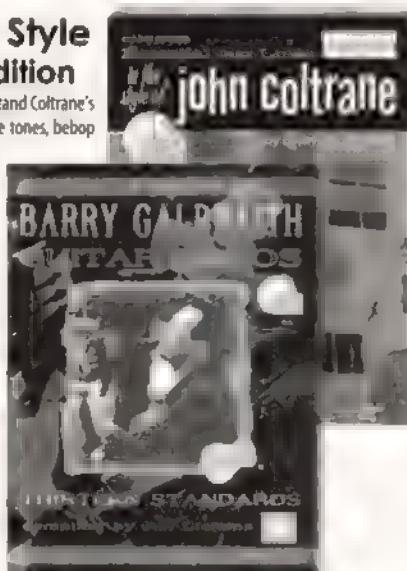
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Handwired Heaven

Vox AC30HW

By Art Thompson

Few guitar amplifiers have so thoroughly captured the imagination as the Vox AC30. Since its introduction in 1960, the AC30 has become synonymous with the Beatles, the Shadows, Queen, Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers, and countless other groups who reveled in its complex, "blizzard of nails" shimmer. And talk about staying power: The 42-year-old design still radiates an air of class and professionalism that puts most other amps to shame. It's all a testament to just how *right* Vox got the AC30.

Not that the AC was *perfect*, mind you, but even after the reliability problems that plagued the original models were dealt with in subsequent reissues, guitarists still yearned for such seemingly pedestrian enhancements as reverb, a proper tremolo (the old, 3-position Vib/Trem circuit hardly qualifies), and the ability to digest global voltages. Vox recently decided to address these issues with a limited-production über AC30, but realizing that "improving" a classic can often yield less-than-spectacular results, the Vox design team took great pains to ensure that the AC30HW—with all its updates—still sounded like a AC30.

The AC30HW (\$4,000, head \$3,250; 2x12 cab \$1,350)—which was developed with input from boutique amp designer Tony Bruno—features the famous Top Boost preamp, but has a control panel that is quite different from the standard model. For starters, there are only two inputs, which



- Four EL84s
- Handwired circuit
- Celestion Blue 12" speakers
- Footswitchable reverb and tremolo
- Multiple speaker jacks (2x8Ω, 1x16Ω)
- 30 watts

are marked Hi and Lo (AC30s have six). To the right are the volume, treble, bass, and tone-cut controls, a tremolo section with speed and depth knobs, a reverb section with reverb and tone controls, and a master volume.

The AC30HW incorporates the excellent tremolo and master-volume circuits found in the reissue AC15. The tube-powered spring reverb was developed specially for the HW, however, and implemented in a manner that would *not* affect the

amp's direct tone. Vox also reportedly spent a great deal of time developing an output transformer that would have similar tonal characteristics as the original's Albion-made unit. Lastly, the HW was fitted with a power transformer that can accommodate wall voltages ranging from 100 to 240 volts.

Inside Story

The HW's innards are easily exposed by removing four screws

that secure the back panel. Inside, there's a nicely rendered circuit with the primary caps and resistors arranged post-to-post style on a phenolic terminal board. All tube sockets (including those for the five preamp bottles and the SAR4 rectifier) are chassis mounted, and the four EL84 output tubes are gripped in heat-proof ceramic sockets. The metal cased, electrolytic caps are bolted to the chassis, and all of the wiring is neatly routed. One annoyance:

Handwired Heaven

The Euro-mandated shield, designed to keep small children and other household pets from contacting the hot tubes, makes it difficult to swap tubes quickly.

Tone Taste

Connoisseurs of AC30 tone will delight in the HW's lush sound. The tones that emanate from the Celestion Blue 15-watt speakers are vividly dimensional and grinding to the max. It's as if the HW has an automatic "more" function that pours on the vibe as you push the volume. I tested the HW with Strats, Teles, Les Pauls, SGs, and various Hamer and PRS guitars, and found it to be equally cool with all of them. In fact, a quick tweak of the Tone Cut knob was typically all that was needed to get richly detailed tones from single-coils or humbuckers.

The tremolo is beautiful for laying down big, throbbing rhythm parts (if you liked it in the AC15, you'll *love* it in the gutsier HW), but where the HW really shows its awesomeness is in the reverb department. The spacious sounds that gush into play as you turn up the reverb level are thrilling to say the least. Whether you simply want to breathe a little air into your tones or simulate crashing surf, the HW is up to the task. And, unlike some 'verbs that load your sound even when set to



Beauty in the beast—The Vox AC30HW features a handwired circuit with the audio caps and resistors on a phenolic terminal board.

zero, the HW's parallel reverb path acts like a true-bypass function to preserve the amp's powerful presence. A great addition is the reverb tone control, which lets you tailor the spring zing to suit your tastes.

Top of the Marque

The AC30HW is by far the best AC variant to date. Few amps come close to matching its radiant complexity, and those that do typically

don't offer reverb *and* tremolo. The only downer about the HW is that only 350 of them will be made (along with 200 heads and cabinets). Bottom line: If you can hang with the premium price, you'll want to get your mitts on this exotic piece of British-American engineering before the supply runs out.

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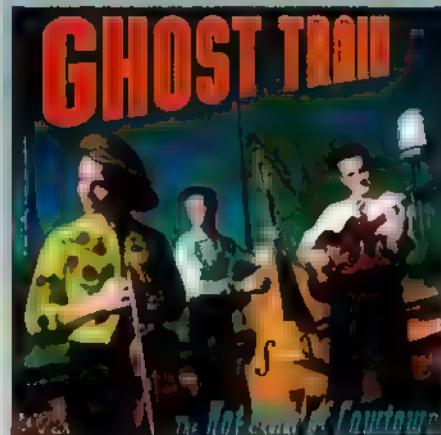
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Cutaway Cool

Guild D50CE

By Art Thompson

Most of today's high-end acoustics offer a ton of performance for the money, and Guild's D50CE (\$2,199 with hardshell case) is a standout instrument that delivers many of the features of costlier models, such as solid-wood construction, a gloss lacquer finish, a cutaway, and sophisticated onboard electronics. Built in sunny Corona, California (where Guild was recently relocated to by parent company Fender), the D50CE is a nicely made guitar with a flawless finish, clean binding, and a beautifully inlaid mosaic back stripe. The glued-in neck mates precisely to the body, and the lightly polished frets are expertly crowned and trimmed. I wish the pickguard was beveled and lacquered over for a smoother feel, but that's not a Guild tradition.

Internally, the D50CE reveals

carefully rendered braces and tight joints. Aside from some excess glue here and there, this guitar gets a thumbs-up for interior decor. Design chief Tim Shaw (formerly of Gibson and Epiphone) reworked the D50CE's top bracing to make it respond more like a '60s-era D50. These mods included moving the X brace closer to the soundhole, and reducing the soundhole opening to $3\frac{3}{4}$ in. In addition, the large transverse brace was rotated slightly to accommodate the cutaway.

Playing It

The D50CE's round, medium-thick neck feels great, and the low action and light-gauge strings make for easy playing. As expected from a dreadnought, the D50CE is loud and crisp, and it has a midrange punch reminiscent of a Martin D28. Strummed chords sound big and

- Ebony bridge
- Nitrocellulose lacquer finish
- Fishman Prefix Pro electronics with mic/pickup blend control, 3-band EQ, phase switch, and variable frequency notch-filter
- Grover tuners
- Solid mahogany neck
- 25 $\frac{5}{8}$ in. scale ebony fingerboard
- Solid spruce top
- Solid rosewood back and sides



Snapshot

The Guild D50CE (\$2,199 retail/\$1,649 street) features a gloss finish, solid-wood construction, and a Fishman Prefix system with a mic/pickup blend control.

The Ratings Game

Tone

Playability

Workmanship

Materials

Value

Design

Guild D50CE



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Bench Tests

Cutaway Cool

bold, and fingerstyle passages sparkle with detail. Bluegrass pickers will dig the D50CE's bright, fat lead sound, while acoustic blues players will appreciate its thumping bass and sweet top-end.

The Fishman Prefix system does an excellent job of bringing the above qualities into the amplified realm. The under-saddle pickup yields

Kissing Cousins

Martin DC-16RE : \$2,399 retail/street price N/A

Seagull Rosewood Cutaway Spruce: \$1,515 retail/street price N/A

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reasonably warm tones, and any harshness that occurs when you pick or strum hard can easily

be mitigated via the internal mic. Just blend in some of its signal with the top-mounted slider, and the tones instantly become rounder, airier, and more acoustic. You have to be mindful of feedback when using the mic, but the notch-filter and phase switch help keep the howls at bay when playing at higher volumes. The D50CE isn't fussy about what it's plugged into, either. With a little tweaking of the contour, bass, and treble sliders, it was possible to get happening tones through amps as diverse as a Trace-Elliott TA100R and a Fender Super Reverb.

Solid Deal

With its vibey tones and flexible electronics, the D50CE is a hip choice for any acoustic style that demands a big, soulful sound. If you're poised to plunk down the plasters for an American-made dreadnought, consider the powerful D50CE—it delivers the goods at a price that'll put a smile on your face.

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Gizmo Alert Z. Vex Lo-Fi Loop Junky

At first glimpse, the Lo-Fi Loop Junky might not seem particularly attractive, and I'm not referring to Vex's trademark psycho-delic paint job. This \$350 stompbox has fewer features than any recent looping device, and it sounds crappier than all of them. A *lot* crappier.

Are you still here? Good. Because if you're the sort of player whose ears perk to such adjectives as "crappy," "trashy," and "sleazy," you just may become addicted to this funky analog looper.

The Junky's loops are dull, hissy, and hyper-compressed. (Imagine the sound of a Lyndon Johnson-era cassette tape and you've got the idea.) The hiss level fluctuates according to the position of the record-level knob, but even under optimal settings, the Loop Junky pedal is noisy as hell. A dedicated tone knob lets you

dial in any color you like, so long as it falls somewhere between a little and a little *less* high end.

The pedal offers no sound-on-sound and no reverse playback—just a single 20-second sample. It can't store multiple loops, but it remembers a single loop for a long, long time. Or, as Zachary Vex puts it in his typically hilarious instructions: "If you unplug your cables, take out the battery, and bury it for a hundred years, the last loop you recorded will still be there when you drag yourself out of the grave and plug it in for the centennial resurrection gig."

One footswitch starts and ends the loop cycle, and another toggles the looped sound in and out of the signal path. A vibrato circuit with rate and depth controls adds extra wobble, evoking the sound of a warped 45 or a tape machine with moribund



motors. The wiring is true-bypass.

As true retro-delay aficionados will tell you, nothing conjures atmosphere like sonically degraded delays. That's one reason why just about any vintage echo fetches top dollar today, even though their tech specs are laughable by current standards. Similarly, the Loop Junky generates a worn, lived-in sound that can lend

instant atmosphere to a track. It's the same vibe that has elevated such no-fi keyboards as the Chamberlin and Optigan to cult status. The Loop Junky never sounds *good*, but it often sounds cool.

—JOE GORE

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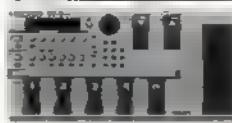
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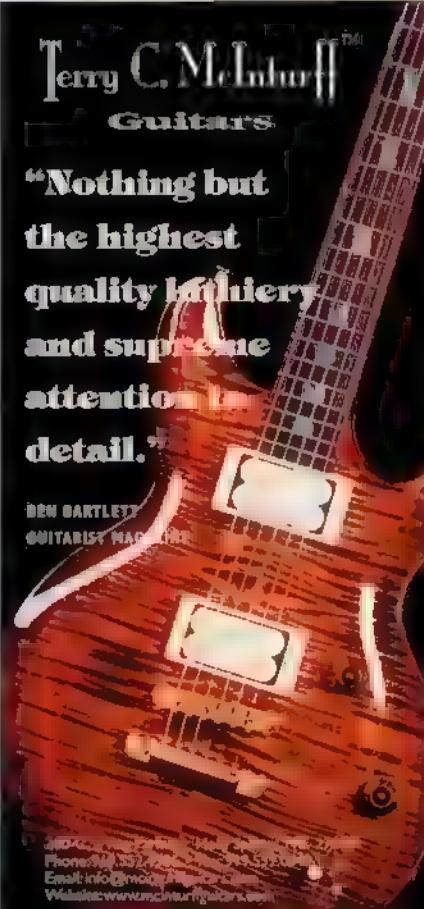
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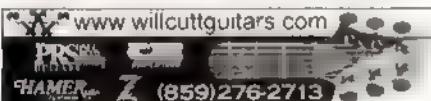
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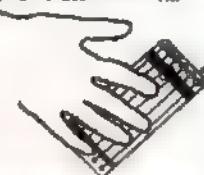


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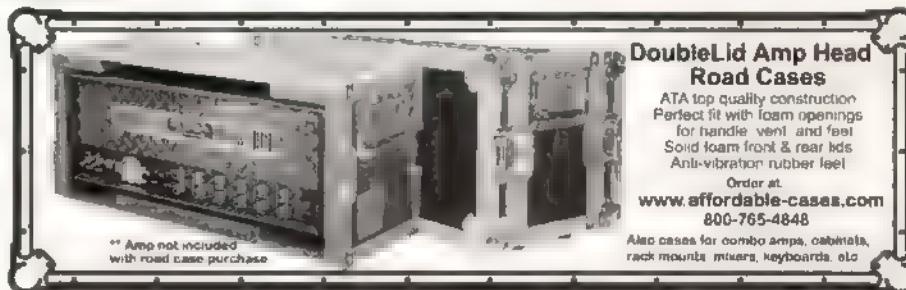
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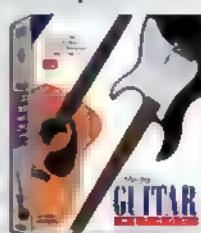
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JAZZ CRITIC RALPH

Gleason called Wes Montgomery the most influential guitarist since Charlie Christian. Gleason interviewed Wes in 1960, but the transcript remained unpublished until *Guitar Player's* July 1973 issue. The cover photo is the coolest: Wes on a tall wooden stool, dark suit, tab-collar shirt, skinny black tie, French cuffs, gold watch, thumbin' a gorgeous gold-plated sunburst Gibson L-5 with beautifully yellowed binding, the epitome of hipness and class.

—TOM WHEELER

How did you get interested in guitar?

Charlie Christian. There was no way out. That cat tore everybody's head up. "Solo Flight" was the first record of his I heard. Boy,

that was too much! He was it for me.

You taught yourself to play?

Yeah, with Christian's records. I knew that everything done on his guitar could be done on mine, because I had a 6-string, so I was just determined that I would do it. In my first gigs, I played Charlie Christian solos. I got pretty good and went on the road. We starved. I didn't realize you'd have a gig in Kansas City, then Florida. Thousand miles a night. That was rough, man.

You don't use a pick.

No, that's one of my downfalls. To get a certain amount of speed, you should use a pick, I think. A lot of cats say you don't have to play fast, but being able to play fast can allow you to phrase better. I just didn't like the sound. I like the tone better with the thumb, and the technique better with the

pick, but I couldn't have both.

Do you ever run into classical players, such as Segovia?

No, and I don't want to, because those cats will scare you. It doesn't make any difference that they're playing classical—there's so much guitar. He'll make you feel like, "What are you playing jazz for? This is what you should be playing." But I'd imagine if a jazz player is really playing, the classical musician will have to respect him.

Where do you want to go with your playing?

I'm just so limited. Playing octaves was just a coincidence. And it's still such a challenge. I used to have headaches every time I played octaves—the extra strain—but now I don't get the headaches. There a lot of things that can be done on the guitar. Regardless of what you play, the biggest thing to me is keeping a *feeling*. ■

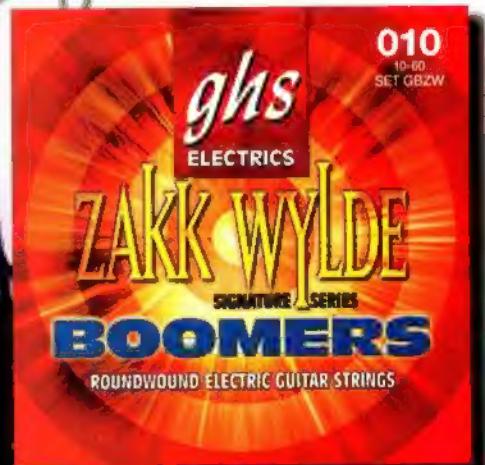


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Late night at the Shrine Auditorium

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